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ABSTRACT

This report of a 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education affirms the principle of "Education for All" and the specific concept of inclusion of students with special educational needs in schools throughout the world. The conference was represented by 92 governments and 25 international organizations. The text of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action is provided, along with background information which addresses new thinking in special needs education and guidelines for action at the national, regional, and international levels. Conference summaries are presented on the following conference themes: policy and legislation, school perspectives, community perspectives, and partnership and networking. Specific topics include: legislation to ensure rights of individuals with disabilities; policy regarding integration and separate provision for education for students with disabilities; policies on curriculum; funding and organizational support for inclusion education; teacher education for inclusion; the role of parents and organizations; partnerships between government and organizations; and the role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Appendices include: two opening addresses by Federico Mayor and Gustavo Suarez Pertierra, a list of conference committees and conference papers and authors, and a list of conference participants by country. (SW)

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Final Report

WORLD CONFERENCE ON SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION: ACCESS AND QUALITY

Salamanca, Spain, 7-10 June 1994



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Preface

This Final Report of the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality is intended to present a concise summary of the deliberations of the Conference. It draws mainly on the presentations made in plenary and concurrent sessions and on the group discussions which ensued.

For easy reference, we have included the integral text of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action. These texts are available separately in Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

The background document has also been integrated into the report (Annex 3) in order to provide in a more detailed form the conceptual framework of the Conference as well as some of the organizational aspects related to its preparation.

The Salamanca Conference provided a platform to affirm the principle of Education for All and to discuss the practice of ensuring that children and young people with special educational needs are included in all such initiatives and take their rightful place in a learning society.

The Conference documents are informed by the principle of "inclusion", recognizing the need to work towards schools for all. The key messages that emanated from the Conference constitute a worldwide consensus and provide a forward-looking agenda on future directions for special needs education.

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THE SALAMANCA STATEMENT

Reaffirming the right to education of every individual, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and renewing the pledge made by the world community at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All to ensure that right for all regardless of individual differences,

Recalling the several United Nations declarations culminating in the 1993 United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, which urges States to ensure that the education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the education system,

Noting with satisfaction the increased involvement of governments, advocacy groups, community and parent groups, and in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, in seeking to improve access to education for the majority of those with special needs still unreached; and recognizing as evidence of this involvement the active participation of highlevel representatives of numerous governments, specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations in this World Conference,

1.

We, the delegates of the World Conference on Special Needs Education representing ninety-two governments and twenty-five international organizations, assembled here in Salamanca, Spain, from 7-10 June 1994, hereby reaffirm our commitment to Education for All, recognizing the necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults with special educational needs within the regular education system, and further hereby endorse the Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, that governments and organizations may be guided by the spirit of its provisions and recommendations.

2.

We believe and proclaim that:

- every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning,
- every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs,
- education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs,
- those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a childcentred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs,
- regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

3.

We call upon all governments and urge them to:

- give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties,
- adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise,
- develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges with countries having experience with inclusive schools,
- establish decentralized and participatory mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluating educational provision for children and adults with special education needs,

- encourage and facilitate the participation of parents, communities and organization of persons with disabilities in the planning and decisionmaking processes concerning provision for special educational needs,
- invest greater effort in early identification and intervention strategies, as well as in vocational aspects of inclusive education,
- ensure that, in the context of a systemic change, teacher education programmes, both preservice and inservice, address the provision of special needs education in inclusive schools.

4.

We also call upon the international community; in particular we call upon:

- governments with international cooperation programmes and international funding agencies, especially the sponsors of the World Conference on Education for All, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank:
 - to endorse the approach of inclusive schooling and to support the development of special needs education as an integral part of all education programmes;
- the United Nations and its specialized agencies, in particular the International Labour Office (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNESCO and UNICEF:
 - to strengthen their inputs for technical cooperation, as well as to reinforce their cooperation and networking for more efficient support to the expanded and integrated provision of special needs education;
- non-governmental organizations involved in country programming and service delivery:
 - to strengthen their collaboration with the official national bodies and to intensify their growing involvement in planning, implementation and evaluation of inclusive provision for special educational needs;

- UNESCO, as the United Nations agency for education:
 - to ensure that special needs education forms part of every discussion dealing with education for all in various forums,
 - to mobilize the support of organizations of the teaching profession in matters related to enhancing teacher education as regards provision for special educational needs,
 - to stimulate the academic community to strengthen research and networking and to establish regional centres of information and documentation; also, to serve as a clearinghouse for such activities and for disseminating the specific results and progress achieved at country level in pursuance of this Statement,
 - to mobilize funds through the creation within its next Medium-Term Plan (1996-2001) of an expanded programme for inclusive schools and community support programmes, which would enable the launching of pilot projects that showcase new approaches for dissemination, and to develop indicators concerning the need for and provision of special needs education.

5.

Finally, we express our warm appreciation to the Government of Spain and to UNESCO for the organization of the Conference, and we urge them to make every effort to bring this Statement and the accompanying Framework for Action to the attention of the world community, especially at such important forums as the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) and the World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

*Adopted by acclamation, in the city of Salamanca, Spain,
on this 10th of June, 1994.*

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW

New opportunities

The Salamanca conference marked a new point of departure for millions of children deprived of education. It provided a unique opportunity to place special needs education within the wider framework of the Education for All (EFA) movement, launched in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and it came at a time when the world's leaders and the United Nations system as a whole were adopting a new vision and taking the first steps to its realization.

The goal is nothing less than the inclusion of all the world's children in schools and the reform of the school system to make this possible. This in turn calls for a major policy and resources shift in most countries of the world, the setting of national targets, and a partnership between all the national and international agencies involved.

The Salamanca Conference provided a platform to affirm the principle and discuss the practice of ensuring that children with special educational needs be included in these initiatives and take their rightful place in a learning society. Experience has demonstrated that their needs can all too easily be overlooked.

Definitions and concepts

Among the 200 million children who are denied access to education throughout the world, a significant number have special educational needs.

In the past, special education was defined in terms of children with a range of physical, sensory, intellectual or emotional difficulties. During the last 15 to 20 years, it has become plain that the concept of special needs education has to be widened to include all

children who, for whatever reason, are failing to benefit from school.

In addition to children with impairments and disabilities who are prevented from attending their local school, there are millions more who are:

- experiencing difficulties in school, whether temporarily or permanently
- lacking interest and motivation in learning
- only able to complete one or two years of primary education forced to repeat grades
- forced to work
- living on the streets
- living too far from any school
- living in severe poverty or suffering from chronic malnutrition
- victims of war and armed conflict
- suffering continuing physical, emotional and sexual abuse, or
- simply not attending school, whatever may be the reason

All these children are being denied the opportunity to learn and to gain the knowledge, understanding and skills to which they are entitled. It is clear that the origins of their difficulties lie not just in themselves but also in the social environments in which they are living. The task for the future is to identify ways in which the school as part of that social environment can create better learning opportunities for all children and by this means to address the challenge that 'the most pervasive source of learning difficulties is the school system itself'.

Building on EFA initiatives

How is the world community responding to this challenge? What priority is given by the nations of the world and by the international community to fostering the growth and development of its children and ensuring that they gain full access to schools?

1990 provided the first signs that the challenge of exclusion from education was being taken up by the world's leaders. *The World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs* (Jomtien, Thailand 1990) and the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990), adopted the goal of *Education for All by the year 2000*.

Access to schools and educational institutions which formed the main focus of the Salamanca discussions should be seen as an essential component of the wider opportunities for life-long education which were identified in the Jomtien discussions.

Three inter-related processes can be identified in these initiatives:

- setting clear targets to increase the number of children attending school,
- taking steps to ensure that they remain in school for long enough to derive real benefit, and
- initiating major school reforms to ensure that what the school offers through its activities, its curriculum and its teachers matches the needs of all its pupils, as well as those of parents and of the local community, and the national need for educated and responsible citizens.

Although children with disabilities are briefly mentioned in the *Final Report from the Jomtien Conference*, as well as in the *World Declaration on Education for All*, little information is available on new initiatives to include them in the implementation of national plans for Education for All (EFA). There is also very little reference to the needs of disabled children in the *Education for All Summit of Nine High-Population Countries* (New Delhi, December 1993) or in the International Consultative Forum on EFA (New Delhi, September 1993).

The Salamanca Conference thus provided the first significant international opportunity to build on these initiatives and to ensure that children with special educational needs, however defined, are included from the outset in national and local plans to open schools to all children and to ensure that schools become enjoyable and challenging learning environments.

Progress in reaching targets, whether in relation to EFA or the inclusion of children with special needs, is beset by major financial and other obstacles. Delegates to the Jomtien Conference, and the follow-up conferences, while reaffirming their full support for the EFA initiatives, repeatedly emphasised that such reforms must be seen in the wider context of the economic situation of their countries.

The Jomtien report included the following stark statistics:

- *More than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, have no access to primary schooling*
- *More than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programmes; millions more satisfy the attendance requirements but do not acquire essential knowledge and skills.*
- *More than 600 million adults, two thirds of whom are women, are illiterate.*
- *The world's population of school-age children will rise from 508 million in 1980 to 724 million by 2000. By the year 2000, if enrolment rates remain at current levels, there will be more than 160 million children without access to primary education, simply because of population growth.*
- *UN estimates suggest that of the 600 million disabled people in the world, 150 million are children under 15 years of age. Less than 2 per cent of these children receive any education or training*

Background to Salamanca Conference

In preparing for the Salamanca conference, UNESCO was able to build on the impetus and commitment created by Jomtien and the Education for All policy, and to work to ensure that special needs issues were not overlooked but brought centre stage.

Similarly, UNESCO was able to take advantage of a number of other recent and current major United Nations initiatives. These include the *International Year of Disabled Persons* (1981) and the subsequent *Decade of Disabled Persons* (1983-1992), the *World Programme of Action in Favour of Disabled Persons* (United Nations 1983), the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), the *Asian Decade of Disabled Persons* (1993-2002) and the recent adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the *Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Disabled Persons*.

All these initiatives have educational implications. In addition, they all encourage a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral approach to the planning and delivery of services to enable disabled people of all ages to become full citizens of their society.

The same principle applies to initiatives where the lead has been taken by other United Nations and international agencies, in co-operation with UNESCO. These include *Community-Based Rehabilitation* (page 45), *Vocational Training* (International Labour Organisation (page 49) and the work of inter-governmental bodies such as the *European Union* (page 54) and the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (page 42).

An important element in the preparation for the World Conference has been a series of five regional seminars organized by UNESCO in 1992-1993, with the support of the Swedish government. These were held in Botswana (eight countries), Venezuela (five countries), Jordan (six countries), Austria (five countries) and China (twelve countries).

The seminars brought together senior education decision-makers from the region, including officials with the lead responsibility for primary and for special education. The purpose of the seminars was to mobilize policy and professional support for pupils with special educational needs within the regular school system. The published seminar reports provide an invaluable source of information on trends at national, regional and global levels. They will constitute a useful baseline against which to monitor and evaluate progress over the next decade and beyond.

The key themes which recurred in all seminars were the following:

1. The creation of inclusive schools which cater for a wide range of pupil need should be given high priority. This could be facilitated by:
 - having a common administrative structure for special and regular education
 - providing special education support services to regular schools and
 - adapting the curriculum and teaching methods
2. Teacher education must be adapted to promote inclusive education and to facilitate collaboration between regular and special education teachers. This is a concern both for general pre-service and in-service teacher education and for specialist in-service education.

3. Pilot projects based on inclusive education should be established and evaluated carefully in the light of local needs, resources and services. Such evaluative information can guide policy and practice in key ways and should be disseminated both within countries and to other countries that share similar circumstances.

UNESCO and Special Needs Education

UNESCO has itself contributed in no small measure to these developments. Working within limited resources, UNESCO has done much not only to disseminate information on good practice but to encourage member states, non-governmental organizations and other members of the United Nations family to initiate new policies and practices in special needs education. Many publications and video training-packages have been produced and disseminated.

Most recently, UNESCO has carried out an international study of legislation (page 28) and designed, field tested and launched *Special Needs in the Classroom*, an innovative project for teacher education (page 42). The *Teacher Education Resource Pack* and the materials which accompany it aim to help teachers to develop their thinking and practice on ways in which school systems and individual teachers can better meet the needs of all pupils experiencing difficulties in learning, including pupils with disabilities.



THE CONFERENCE

The World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality was set within the framework laid down by the World Conference on Education for All. Two over-arching concerns informed the planning of the Conference:

1. Guaranteeing every child, including those with special needs, access to educational opportunities, and
2. Working to ensure that these opportunities represent quality education.

The main purposes of the Conference were to:

- *present new thinking on learning difficulties and disabilities and on the relationship between special educational provision and general school reform;*
- *review recent developments in provision for children and young people with special educational needs;*
- *highlight breakthroughs and significant experiences in key areas such as legislation, curriculum, pedagogy, school organization, teacher education and community participation; and*
- *provide a forum for sharing experiences at international, regional and bilateral levels, and an opportunity for negotiating on-going collaboration.*

Within this broad framework, four major themes were identified and around these the Conference programme was structured (Annex 1)

- policy and legislation
- school perspectives
- community perspectives
- partnership and networking

A working document, prepared by Dr. Seamus Hegarty, served as a starting point for the participants, setting the conceptual frame of reference and the guiding principles against which the above themes were discussed.

The conference programme, which extended over a period of four days, was structured around plenary sessions and concurrent group discussions to which specialists from different countries were invited to present papers. Plenary papers introduced the debate on each of the major themes. Concurrent sessions had brief accounts of country experiences focusing on the theme of the day.

A draft *Framework for Action* prepared by UNESCO was sent out to all participants prior to the Conference and a drafting committee was constituted at the Conference to review and revise it in the light of proposals and amendments put forward by the participants.

The Conference was organized on the initiative of the Government of Spain which issued invitations to the participating countries and generously and efficiently attended to the complex logistics of preparing and conducting an international conference. UNESCO was invited to co-operate with Spain in this important endeavour and gladly accepted responsibility for the professional preparation of the conference, including the establishment of the programme, which was done in consultation with Member States, and the

preparation of the main working documents. Both an organizing committee and a programme committee were constituted to guide the preparation of the conference. The members of these committees are listed in Annex 4.

More than 300 participants, including high-level policy-makers, administrators and specialists representing 92 governments and 25 international organizations participated in the Conference. While those concerned with special education were well represented, the majority of participants were, by intention general educators. As the challenge that the Conference was convened to address was that of guaranteeing all children including those with special needs, access to education of quality, it was essential that those concerned with general educational policies in Member States be present.

Opening

The opening ceremony was held at the Salamanca Palace of Congress and Exhibitions, in the presence of the Her Highness Princess Elena de Bourbon, who officially opened the Conference after the official statements by the President of the Deputation of Salamanca, the Mayor of Salamanca, the Representative of the Director-General of UNESCO and the Minister of Education of Spain.

As Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, was prevented from attending the Conference by urgent matters that did not permit him to leave Headquarters, his speech for the opening session was read by Victor Ordoñez, Director of the Division of Basic Education and Representative of the Director-General at the Conference.

Mayor noted that although education for all was a basic human right, children and adults with special needs have had a low priority and have all too often been ignored. He estimated that only about 1 per cent of children and adults with disabilities were receiving adequate provision. Each participant to the conference should therefore ask themselves what more should and could be done to narrow the gap between policy and practice, between rhetoric and reality.

"What this means, in the simplest terms, is thinking and doing, then thinking about what we have done and how we might do it better".

On the positive side, Mayor emphasized the greater awareness not only of the needs but of the capabilities of disabled people. These capabilities need to be fostered through education and training.

"We have begun to recognise the disabled not as people with problems but as people with untapped potential".

UNESCO had sought to play a catalytic role in encouraging new developments: "providing the pinch of yeast rather than the pound of flour".

Special needs education was not an approach suited to the needs of the few but a pedagogy capable of improving education for the many. New thinking places less emphasis on the deficits of the learner than on the ways in which the learning environment might be better understood so that obstacles to learning which may arise from an inappropriate or inaccessible curriculum could be removed. By the same token, much more could be done to harness the resources of the family and to forge stronger bonds between home and school.

Mayor emphasized that a sense of what can be achieved in special needs education must be communicated to the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen, March 1995).

The time for action is now. We should be asking ourselves 'How many young people and adults with disabilities have mastered the skills and competencies required to function effectively in society? How many have found good and rewarding jobs?'

Gustavo Suárez Pertierra, Minister of Education, then took the floor. In his speech Pertierra highlighted the objectives of the Conference which go beyond special needs education, namely calling for the improvement of the quality of education, noting that the education system must respond to the diversity in the school population. Moreover, he underlined that changes in education are not enough for the transformation of society into a caring community. Social change is not only needed in the schools but also in the labour market, in families, in society at large. The challenge is to defend the right to education, to work and to integration in society. (Annex 2).

Introductory addresses were also delivered by the president of the Deputation of Salamanca and the Mayor of Salamanca.

The delegates then elected the bureau of the Conference. Alvaro Marchesi, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Education, Spain, was elected President of the Conference, with the following four vice-presidents: Pierre Kipre, Minister of Education, Côte d'Ivoire; Bounthong Vixaysakd, Director of General Education, Laos People's Democratic Republic; Maatouk Maatouk, Minister of education, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Bolivar Armuelles Hernandez, Vice-Minister of Education

Panama. Peter Mittler from Manchester University was elected Rapporteur-General.

Throughout the Conference, UNESCO and Spain organized an exhibit of documents, materials and publications relating to various issues covered. UNESCO presented videos from its collection on experiences in the field of special needs education.

Before embarking on the theme of the first day Victor Ordoñez gave a visual presentation with commentary, putting forward a comprehensive overview of special needs education within the framework of Education for All. This helped in setting the scene for the conference debate, as well as for the future. Drawing on UNESCO statistics and surveys, he detailed the scale and scope of the tasks of implementing special needs initiatives throughout the world.

He particularly drew attention to the following:

Children with special educational needs include:

- those who are currently enrolled in primary school but for various reasons do not progress adequately,
- those who are currently not enrolled in primary schools but who could be enrolled if the schools were more responsive, and
- the relatively smaller group of children with more severe physical, mental or multiple impairments who have complex special educational needs that are not being met.

He presented graphic illustrations of the shortfall in provision worldwide. A UNESCO survey conducted in 1986-1987 found that thirty-four out of fifty-one countries from all regions had fewer than 1 per cent of their pupils in special educational provision of any kind. The figure was less than 0.1 per cent for ten of these countries. A further UNESCO survey

due to be published shortly would show a little improvement on this situation.

Closing session

The closing session was chaired by the President of the Conference. The Rapporteur-General was invited to present a synthesis of the proceedings and conclusions of the Conference which consisted of the two documents, the *Salamanca Statement* and the *Framework for Action*. After minor corrections and modifications the two documents were adopted unanimously, including the proposal that the Spanish Government presents this document to the 28th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

This was followed by closing statements. Deng Pufang, President of China Disabled Persons' Federation, stated that the conceptual framework put forward at the Conference, namely that of "inclusive education", had the unanimous understanding of the participants as to the goals that they should set ahead of them, and that each has to try and find out their way to bringing these goals to reality. He underlined the role of governments at all levels in taking the initiative and responsibility, by providing the necessary legislation, policy and support.

Victor Ordoñez, on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, thanked the Spanish authorities and the organizers for their generous efforts in convening this Conference. He underlined that the Conference represented a turning point in the approach to special needs education worldwide – it took place at a strategic time when the approach of inclusive education has been successfully, though not uneventfully, introduced in a few countries, and when the rest of the countries were ready and eager to learn how to implement similar approaches. The issue of special needs education, he emphasized, is one of the few in Education for All that equally concerns countries of the South and North.

The President of the Conference Alvaro Marchesi, then closed the meeting, expressing his gratitude to the participants, speakers, and rapporteurs. He thanked UNESCO for its active collaboration with Spain in the holding of the Conference. He stressed the importance of the Conference conclusions to developments at the international and national level. He further added that it will give added impetus to the work that has begun in Spain.



SUMMARY OF
THEMATIC
PRESENTATIONS
AND
DISCUSSIONS

Theme 1: Policy and Legislation

Special Needs Education: Conceptual framework, planning and policy factors

The opening paper for this theme was presented by Bengt Lindqvist.

Lindqvist identified a number of stages in the evolution of assumptions about attitudes towards disabled people.

- The stage of caring for and helping disabled people to cope with their situation and to live a protected life. This led to the creation of special institutions for living, learning and occupation.
- Advocates of normalization and integration criticised this approach for its isolation and marginalization of disabled people. In contrast, normalization theory emphasized the right of disabled people to live with their family and in the natural environment, and to be prepared and supported in coping with the difficulties which they might face in doing so.
- For a long time, however, the focus of rehabilitation and service planning and delivery, as well as of staff training, remained on the individual, with relatively little attention to ways in which social institutions and attitudes imposed obstacles on disabled people and therefore needed to be changed.
- The 1960s saw a growing realization that rehabilitation, though important, was insufficient and that a new strategy was needed. The social model of disability emphasizes ways in which existing policies and legislation need to be fundamentally modified to ensure the removal of physical and institutional barriers to the full and equal participation of disabled people in the life of the community.
- The disability movement inevitably became more political as it worked for new policies and new laws. At the international level, the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons particularly emphasized equalization of opportunities which was defined as:
 “..the process through which the various systems of society and the environment, such as services, activities, information and documentation are made available to all.”

It is obvious, therefore, that access to ordinary schools and educational establishment is an integral element of equalization of opportunities.

To redress the situation the *Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* was prepared and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in december 1993.

States should recognise the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities. They should ensure that the education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the education system.

Article 6 of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

The challenge now is to formulate requirements of a 'school for all'. All children and young people of the world [...] have the right to education. It is not our education systems that have a right to certain types of children. It is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children.

LINDQVIST

Lindqvist raised some key issues for the future:

- Who is responsible for making standard systems and structures accessible and available to disabled persons?
- How do we distribute responsibility between the legislative body of a country, and the organizers and providers of services?
- How do we obtain and disseminate the necessary knowledge which will make it possible for us to make accurate plans?

Legislation issues

UNESCO has recently undertaken a study of special education legislation in member states. Maria-Rita Saulle, who was involved in the study, presented some of the findings.

By way of introduction to the main findings, she outlined a number of general issues arising from legislation.

- Legislation is usually needed to ensure the rights of disabled persons to equal rights and equal opportunities.

- "Many countries experience problems in implementing legislation in ways that affect the day to day life of the people it is meant to serve. As far as people with disabilities are concerned, legislation is not just a reflection of society's attitudes; it is an effective way of producing necessary changes in the allocation of resources and in shaping human behaviour. At best, the law recognizes persons with disabilities as potential contributors to the socio-economic fabric of a country, rather than merely passive recipients of special services and financial benefits".

Compulsory education

Many changes in legislation had been made in the past ten years, particularly in relation to compulsory education. Although thirty-five out of the fifty-two countries which replied to the enquiry claimed to have compulsory education for all pupils, it was also clear that this law was not always literally enforced and that there were many exceptions, due to lack of resources. Very few countries stated that no children were

excluded on grounds of disability or not even able to enter schools in the first place. There were also references to 'degrees of disability' which suggested that children with severe disabilities often could not be admitted to schools for practical reasons. Half the countries referred to categories of special education.

Policy as regards integration

Reports on integration policy were difficult to interpret, as this term is used very loosely. Some countries that expressed a strong commitment to integrated education still planned to retain special schools and classes. Eleven of the fifty-two countries envisaged nothing but mainstream education while the others opted for a continuum of provision including both specialist and supported mainstream education. Seven countries appeared to opt for separate provision, while still supporting the principle of integration.

An example of principles and philosophy is provided from the State of Victoria, Australia:

- *Every child has the right to be educated in a regular school.*
- *Provision should be organized according to student need rather than disability.*
- *Resources and services should be school-based*
- *Decision-making should be collaborative*
- *All children can learn and be taught*
- *Integration is a curriculum issue*

Curriculum

Countries adopted varying policies on curriculum. Specialist curricula for specific groups are still common; in a few countries, the general curriculum for all pupils is adapted according to the needs of specific categories of children or in relation to the needs of individual children, regardless of category. In these situations, attempts are made to make the general curriculum accessible to groups or individuals by breaking the work down into smaller steps, by the use of microtechnology or through support teachers.

Parental involvement

The documentation provided made relatively little mention of parental involvement in assessment and decision-making concerning their child.

Teacher training

More than half the countries reported that special education was covered in the initial training of all teachers, but this was not always compulsory, and the scope and nature of the training were unclear.

Separate or integrated legislation?

In conclusion, Saulle raises a fundamental question on whether there should be separate and specific legislation for disabled people (as in Italy) or whether legal provision should be incorporated in general legislation (as in most Scandinavian countries). She concludes in favour of the second option on the following grounds:

- *Separate legislation might be too vague or non-specific*
- *There would be a risk that regulations might be tightened and more exclusive*
- *There is a further risk of marginalization, especially if funds to support disability legislation are not forthcoming*

In any case, clear monitoring mechanisms are essential. These include regular inspections, nominating an Ombudsperson and responding to complaints and representations made by individual disabled persons, their families or by pressure groups.

Special educational needs and educational reform: the case of Spain

This issue presented by Alvaro Marchesi focused on the case of Spain. The Spanish reforms originated in a law passed in 1985. This envisaged an eight-year programme in the course of which major changes of curriculum and organisation were planned for ordinary schools. In 1990, a new law guaranteed a quality education for all students throughout the entire education system.

At the heart of the Spanish policy lies the realization that reform of special education and the full inclusion of all children in ordinary schools can come about only as a result of a reform of the school and of the education system as a whole. It is the whole education system, and not just one aspect of it which should be reformed to make inclusive education possible.

Curriculum reform and attention to student diversity are essential at every level. Teachers are given considerable autonomy in adapting the curriculum to the needs of their students, to develop common criteria for assessment and to have access to technical and human supports.

The reforms made in the education system should facilitate the development of suitable curricula for children with special educational needs, planning with care, adapted to the learning rhythm of the children, and developed by competent and motivated teachers.

The twin aims of the Spanish integration programme have involved:

- opening up mainstream schools to pupils currently in special schools
- improving the education of the 15 to 20 per cent of students already in mainstream schools who experience learning difficulties by providing them with greater resources and support.

The scheme had a number of key elements:

- Early education: multi-disciplinary teams were created to identify and assess young children with special educational needs, and to encourage and plan their integration into schools
- Gradual and voluntary introduction of integration to a sample of schools, beginning with pre-school and the first year of primary education
- Guaranteed reduction in class size and access to a support team
- Inclusion of a special needs element in teacher training
- Creation of a national resource centre for special education to develop curriculum materials, methods of assessment and intervention
- Special schools to admit only children with the most severe disabilities and to share their expertise with mainstream schools
- Media campaign to enlist public and professional support for the reforms.

One of the most important events of the integration programme has been the increasingly positive attitude of the educational community and that of society towards the incorporation of disabled students into mainstream schools.

Responses

Responses to the main presentations under Theme 1 were given by representatives of Colombia and Botswana in the form of a summary of policy and service developments in their respective countries.

This was followed by a presentation by Dr James Lynch of the World Bank who provided a summary of the Asia Regional Study on Children with Special Educational Needs. This study was concerned with the inclusion of children with special educational needs within universal primary education in the Asia Region. The study employed case study and documentary survey research techniques in fifteen countries in the region. An attempt was made to distil the essence of 'good practice' in including children with special educational needs within ordinary primary schools with the aim of identifying those policies, approaches and interventions which are desirable if fully inclusive primary education is to be achieved.

The paper aims to provide a rationale for those making decisions to support the inclusion of the vast majority of children with special educational needs into the regular school systems.

The World Bank study considers three ways in which a more inclusive approach to primary education may be justified:

- In humanitarian terms, as a basic human right
- In economic terms, within greater economic and social development and nation building
- In utilitarian terms, on a broader scale by empowering people to take control over their own lives.

- *There are personal, social and economic dividends to educating primary aged children with special educational needs, wherever possible in mainstream schools.*
- *Most children with special educational needs can be successfully and less expensively accommodated in integrated than in fully segregated settings.*
- *The vast majority of children with special educational needs can be cost-effectively accommodated in regular primary schools.*
- *Changes towards more inclusive primary education may already be perceived in policy and practice in many countries at all levels of economic development in the Asia region.*
- *The costs of continuing family, community and social dependence are far greater than the investments necessary to educate such children.*
- *A combined health, nutrition and educational strategy is desirable if all children are to benefit from primary education.*

James Lynch, World Bank

Summary of discussions groups

Four small discussion groups examined key questions in greater depth and reported their findings to a plenary session where further discussion took place.

The following were among the main issues discussed:

1. *What are the main reasons for the exclusion of children with special educational needs from ordinary schools?*

- Parallel systems of provision and categories of handicapping conditions exist.
- Costs to the education system and to individual schools; the nature of the assessment and decision-making in schools; costs to family, religion, gender, local attitudes and culture; lack of political and professional will; and cultural factors, parental choice.

Changes in terminology are needed to reflect changes in policy and practice; – a specific example is the shift from 'special' to 'inclusive'.

2. *What are the obstacles to inclusion?*

- Lack of teacher training
- Lack of human and material resources
- Lack of co-ordination between regular and special education systems and schools
- Lack of acceptance and/or understanding by society and its representatives.

3. *How can special needs education be financed and is funding an obstacle to integration?*

- If separate funding is provided for special needs education, then special schools will want to take more pupils. This would constitute an obstacle to integration.
- All relevant ministries should contribute to funding
- Increases in birth rate and in child survival will lead to higher levels of demand for special needs education

4. *Is separate legislation on special needs necessary?*

- There was general agreement that special legislation was not necessary but that provision should be made within general laws and regulations for children who need additional or separate provision. Separate legislation leads to marginalization and stigmatization.

5. *Is it helpful or necessary to have formal categories of special needs education?*

- The general consensus appeared to be that the move away from categories based on medical classification systems was a positive one. The focus should be on the unique needs of individuals, regardless of medical or other labels. However, it is important for teachers to be aware of and to understand medical information.
- The view was expressed that the needs of gifted children were being overlooked and that they too had special educational needs which were not being met by schools or government departments.

6. *Strategic solutions*

- Political will at every level
- Planning strategies that call for ordinary and special systems to work together within a single administrative framework
- Participation of non-governmental organizations concerned with disability in policy-making, planning and decision-making

A general issue which arose concerned the need to find an acceptable definition of inclusive education and to distinguish this from integration or mainstreaming. It was suggested that an essential element of the concept of inclusion was concerned with systemic changes at the level of the school and the school district, as well as in the planning of educational provision at the level of local and central government. In contrast, mainstreaming was concerned with individuals or small groups within the present system, without any necessary assumption that this system needed to be changed to make inclusion possible for other children.

Theme 2: School Perspectives

The papers presented within the second of the four major conference themes are broadly concerned with the planning and delivery of education in mainstream schools, using current knowledge derived from good practice and published research. This leads naturally to the fundamental challenge of the nature of the knowledge, skills and understanding required of all teachers in all schools in order to achieve inclusive education and how this can be provided through a planned but participative strategy for staff development.

Serving students with special educational needs: equity and access

There is no lack of knowledge about what to do and how to do it. The central issue in implementing the vision of educational equity is how to tie together resources (teacher expertise, curricular accommodations, administrative and organizational support for programme implementation) and outcomes in ways that simultaneously achieve equity goals and accountability.

Margaret Wang

This bold quotation captures the spirit of Margaret Wang's optimism that we already have the knowledge to assure a higher quality of schooling and classroom success

for students with special educational needs. The challenge is one of disseminating and adapting such knowledge to the needs of teachers and students in specific school contexts.

Her presentation draws on a large body of research on school and instructional effectiveness, and seeks to highlight some key principles which could be applied outside the North American context within which the research was carried out. Underlying all the suggestions is an attempt to identify aspects of the learning environment which can be modified by teachers. This is in contrast to traditional approaches in which attempts are made to compensate for alleged deficits and 'risk factors' in individual children by the introduction of additional programmes. The emphasis is on improvements in the quantity and quality of the achievements of students involved in the same curriculum as their fellow students.

'If schooling success is recognized as possible for everyone through instructional accommodation, the major task of the schools is the creation of learning environments that uphold a standard of equity in educational outcomes for all students. The focus should be on identifying practices that deny equal access to curriculum and to practices which promote it.

'Provision of equality of opportunity for educational success can be characterized, therefore, in terms of the use of school time, the quality of instruction, the content of instruction and instructional grouping practices.

'Whether student diversity is addressed through the adoption of innovative instructional approaches or through some

organizational restructuring approach, one principle should remain paramount: all students can achieve the educational goals of basic education if properly supported. [...] Achieving educational equity will require using the best of what we currently know about effective instruction and schooling effectiveness'.

Organization of schooling: achieving access and quality through inclusion

Gordon Porter also starts from the assumption of inclusive education but focuses sharply on the nature of the support needed by students to become successful learners and members of the school community. His perspective is that of an educational planner and manager with responsibility for fourteen schools and 5,000 students in one of eighteen school districts of New Brunswick, Canada.

The starting point is not seen in terms of students with defects and disabilities and how these might be remediated but rather in terms of how we can improve our practice as educators to meet their needs within an inclusive system.

He stresses that true inclusion will require significant change to what has become traditional educational practice. In areas where inclusion has been successfully pursued, significant effort to support the change process has been present. What is required above all is a vision of what the positive outcomes will be; leadership and co-ordination and support programmes and processes.

Some of the essential characteristics of the approach are as follows:

- Funding is based on the same grant per special needs student, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability or need.

'The result is less focus on disability and greater focus on support services to teachers and all students with special needs.' Such a funding system 'assumes that every school and thus every district will need a certain level of support services, simply because the school serves a heterogeneous population of students.'

'A school system that hands over all students with learning problems and disabilities to a separate education structure undermines its ability to be a holistic unit that serves all students.'

The service that used to be known as special education is now called student services and supports not only all students but also the classroom teacher and the school principal in achieving the goal of inclusive education. Student services teams operate at local level to clusters of schools.

Porter further highlighted the critical factors in organizing school-based support that make inclusion possible for teachers and students:

- A new role for the special educator
- Multi-level instruction
- Co-operative learning
- Classroom and student management
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Peer support groups
- Peer tutoring skills
- Staff development

Special needs education cannot advance in isolation. It must be part of an overall educational strategy and, indeed, of new social and economic policies. This requires a review of the policy and practice in every subsector within education, from pre-school to universities, to ensure that the curricula, activities and programmes are, to the maximum extent possible, fully accessible to all.

FEDERICO MAYOR
Director General, UNESCO

- Multi-level instruction

'Multi-level instruction involves identifying the main concepts to be taught in a lesson; determining different methods of presentation to meet the different learning styles of students; determining a variety of ways in which students are allowed to express their understanding; and developing a means of evaluation that accommodates different ability levels.'

It follows that organizational supports for inclusive education must be in place at the provincial or state level, the regional or school district level and at the level of the school itself. These structures, programmes and policies must deliver the support needed by classroom teachers and their students.

Rethinking teacher education

If inclusive education is to become a reality, the need for teacher education involves every teacher in every school, as well as all those training to be teachers. It calls for the changing of attitudes and levels of awareness in professional staff and volunteers working in related fields, such as pre-school and post-school education, staff of agencies in the related fields of health, social welfare and employment, as well as planners, administrators and decision-makers, whether elected or appointed.

N.K. Jangira's presentation provides an encouraging example of what can be achieved by way of a national strategic plan in a large developing country such as India. Although policy and decision-making in relation to education are largely devolved to the state level, the Government of India has established national structures such as the National Council for

Educational Research and Training (NCERT) which facilitates strategic planning at national and international levels but which works through regional centres as well as through selected individual schools.

The approach can be described under a number of headings but it is important to stress that these are inter-related and complementary.

Pre-service teacher training

It is axiomatic that every student teacher must be provided with a special educational needs component as a compulsory element of initial training.

A UNESCO survey of teacher training for special needs in 1986 established that several countries were beginning to include special needs component into the initial training of all teachers. Although considerable progress has been made since that time, there is a lack of clarity on how this goal is to be achieved and the resources required to do so.

Professor Jangira's paper illustrates two contrasting approaches. One alternative is to design a focused tailor-made course or module, relevant to local conditions. This has the advantage of concentrating attention on special needs issues and providing an opportunity to assess student knowledge and perhaps competence.

A second alternative is to ensure that each component of initial training includes appropriate attention to the needs of all children, particularly those with special educational needs. It acquires the same status in curriculum transaction as any other element. All teacher educators receive a basic orientation to special needs and in the process special education is demystified.

In-service training

The aim of in-service training is to develop what has been termed 'pedagogical intelligence'. This involves, in the words of Wedell's commentary on this symposium, the extent to which 'the teacher and the school can think themselves into the pupil's view of the learning task [...] and are given the time to attend to differences in their pupils' learning needs.'

Jangira summarizes experience in India and from published research which lead to a number of 'guiding principles' on effective in-service training.

- For systemic change, training should be provided to actors in the game
- Training should be continuous instead of a single shot affair
- Training should be relevant and meet the unique needs of individuals in the workplace
- Training should be provided in as similar a situation as possible to that in the workplace
- Provide for demonstration, practice and feedback to ensure mastery over knowledge and skills
- Provide for individuals an opportunity for constant reflection and review of new knowledge and skills in the context of practice in the workplace
- Individuals should be encouraged to plan action research to transfer and fine tune skills to practice demands in the workplace.
- Plan support and collaboration in the workplace as integral components of the training design to ensure transfer of knowledge and skills, and to institutionalize the change.

Education and training of special school teachers

Jangira envisages a key role for special school teachers in the future, but one that will require considerable reorientation and training. In particular, the role of special schools is increasingly to support integration – for example by outreach work, acting as a resource and curriculum development centre to schools and individual teachers. Consequently, a number of changes are occurring in this field:

- Single disability training programmes are being modified to include a core course on all disabilities and specialization in one.
- Support teachers are being trained in more than one disability
- Training programmes now focus on the skills required to work with other teachers (consultancy), and to plan and deliver training programmes for them.

Networking for change

A notable feature of the Indian strategy as described by Jangira involves national and international networking and the use of existing institutions and infrastructures.

A 'worked example' is provided of how the *UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack* was introduced into India through the Multi-Site Action Research Project (MARP). This involved 33 co-ordinators from 22 agencies. Two specialists from each institution were selected to provide training and practice in the use of the *Resource Pack* material and to develop action research projects in pre-service and in-service training contexts. The project involved 338 experienced teachers, 248 pre-service students and some 10,000 children in 115 sites spread over 23 different sites across the whole country. A detailed evaluation of the project yielded positive results in terms of teacher attitudes, pupil participation in learning, classroom

Reform in special education [...] represents just about all the issues involved in bringing about educational reform. The solutions to inclusion are not easily achieved. It is complex both in the nature and degree of change required to identify and implement solutions that work. Given what change requires – persistence, co-ordination, follow-up, conflict resolution and the like – leadership at all levels is required.'

MICHAEL FULLAN

drawings (teachers and pupils) and a learning preference questionnaire.

Response

In his response to the three papers in Theme 2, Klaus Wedell highlighted the contrasts between the visions of excellence produced by the three speakers and the day-to-day classroom and systemic realities of provision in many countries. How can the gulf between them be narrowed and eventually closed?

The education systems of most countries were not designed with the aims of inclusion in mind. It should not surprise us therefore that most still respond to the challenge of diversity and curriculum differentiation by various simple expedients, all involving some form of exclusion – either from the school as a whole, from parts or all of the curriculum, or from mixed ability teaching through streaming and partial segregation within the ordinary school.

'Inclusive education implies starting with children and young people as they are in all their diversity and then designing a system which is flexible enough to be responsive to individual differences.'

Wedell highlights the current inclusion paradox, namely that pupils' human rights to inclusion in their local school can be frustrated by the frequent inability of those schools to meet their individual needs or to respond appropriately to pupil diversity.

Progress towards inclusion involves a number of elements. At the macro level, this involves fundamental reforms in the ordinary school and at a systemic level it involves:

- *Restructuring of curriculum access and differentiation,*
- *An effective and non-exclusive system of assessment and recording of curricular targets and achievements,*
- *New forms of partnership with parents and other family members such as brothers and sisters,*
- *The development of group and co-operative learning,*
- *Peer teaching,*
- *Creative use of microtechnology and computer-assisted learning.*

Summary of discussion groups

The discussion groups were able to dwell in greater depth on the issues presented in plenary. Furthermore, two specific projects were presented and discussed: the UNESCO Teacher Education Project *Special Needs in the Classroom* and the Project *Active Life for Disabled Youth: Integration in the School* of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Both drew on the country experiences of their respective partners.

Access to the curriculum

- Where children with severe cognitive impairments are concerned, the 'subjects to be learned' are very different from the curriculum of the ordinary school. The curriculum should therefore be adapted to include activities for daily living and functional skills, such as cooking a simple meal, taking a bus alone, etc. These skills should be taught in partnership with parents.
- The crisis in secondary education is reflected in huge numbers of drop-outs and marginal behaviour (early pregnancy, drug abuse and court convictions). Can schools meet the needs of 'angry youth' as well as students with disabilities? Should we be thinking of alternatives to traditional schooling, including supported employment?
- Access to the curriculum depends on:
 - legislative and administrative support
 - availability of resources
 - parental and public support
 - training of personnel
 - teacher motivation and incentives
 - multi-disciplinary support groups
 - adequate evaluation criteria for pupils and projects
- Obstacles include:
 - attitudinal barriers
 - poor motivation of teachers
 - fears of unemployment by special school teachers
 - inadequate training and materials
 - inappropriate methods of assessment leading to exclusion
 - experiences of developed countries not necessarily relevant or transferable to developing countries

Case studies were also presented from Canada, Spain, and United States.

Organization of schooling

A number of issues were considered in the discussion groups. Country reports were also provided by Austria, Peru, Spain and Zimbabwe.

- The quality of the learning experiences available to students with special needs in the ordinary classroom needed to be assured.
- There are real fears in some countries that special-school teachers will lose their jobs as a consequence of integration policies.
- For integration to succeed, there has to be a real transfer of knowledge, skills and experience from specialists to generalist teachers. Furthermore, knowledge has to be reviewed and renewed.
- There should be an international exchange of ideas and experiences on integration and school organization, with the support of UNESCO, so that developed and developing countries can learn from one another.

Teacher training

- Special education included in the initial training of pre-school, primary and secondary teachers should be generic and broad-based.
- Built on the above, there should be for some the opportunity to develop a further broad-based training to develop a 'master level' of regular teacher.
- A third level would involve specialization, but the development of an elite special education teacher group should be avoided.
- A general policy of in-service training should be in place in order to prevent the gulf between regular field teachers and

new graduates exposed to special needs education just entering the field. Incentives for in-service should be available.

- Training should be available for administrators.
- Disabled persons should be given opportunities to participate in curriculum planning and delivery of training.
- Training should reflect due recognition to diverse cultural contexts that call for context-appropriate approaches.
- Distance education programmes need to be developed which will include materials for self-study, audio-visual materials and face-to-face tuition by locally appointed tutors.

Special needs in the classroom

On the UNESCO Project introduced by Lena Saleh and Mel Ainscow, a team of resource persons presented examples of teacher education initiatives and changing practice in schools from Ghana, India, Italy, and Latin America.

The aim of the UNESCO teacher-education project *Special Needs in the Classroom* is to develop and disseminate a resource pack of ideas and materials for use by teacher educators to support teachers in mainstream schools in responding to pupil diversity. Following consultation, a pilot version was field tested in 1990 and 1991 by a team of resource people in nine countries – Canada, Chile, China, India, Jordan, Kenya, Malta, Spain and Zimbabwe.

The pack was then rewritten to include the manual and associated video programmes. Data collected indicate that the content of the materials is appropriate for teachers in each of these national contexts, focusing on issues that

they find meaningful and relevant, and helping them to develop their thinking and practice.

The pack has been introduced to groups in over forty countries and is now the basis for regional development projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Arab States and, more specifically, is part of a major national initiative in China, India and Thailand. The pack has been found to be useful in in-service, pre-service and school improvement contexts. The UNESCO Resource Pack is now available in fifteen languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Lao, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai, and Vietnamese).

Active life for disabled youth: integration in school

Peter Evans summarized two reports from current OECD studies involving twenty-one member countries, both concerned with the desirability and feasibility of educating children with special educational needs alongside their peers in ordinary schools.

The first report deals with differences between member states in the ways in which disabilities are recognized and provided for. Government policies support the view that many of the children now being educated in separate special schools could and should benefit from attendance at ordinary schools. With the principle of inclusion agreed, the emphasis has now shifted to determining the most effective method of achieving it.

The report reviews developments in the training of teachers and in the involvement of parents in their children's schooling. It suggests that integrated placements are likely to be less expensive than segregated ones. It also outlines key features which any integration plan should

consider, whether at the level of a country, region or district.

The second report is based on sixty-one case-studies and summarizes what appear to be the main features of good practice in integrated education.

Success is associated with teachers

- Being in supportive schools
- Having positive attitudes
- Being skilled at teaching mixed ability groups
- Have periodic extra teaching help
- Having time to plan their work and discuss with specialists, and
- Having access to in-service training.

The study concludes that while integration was found to provide academic benefits for disabled children, it sometimes left them socially isolated. Some suggestions were made on how such isolation could be reduced.

This was followed by the presentation of country experiences from each of Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Iceland, Italy and the United States. All related to integration on the school; however, each reflected on a specific aspect of their country's experience.

Theme 3: Community Perspectives

Community-Based Rehabilitation

Special needs education does not exist in isolation. It can only be understood and developed in the context of its community. This includes parents, the neighbourhood in which the school is situated and the attitudes of local people to schooling in general and to the local school in particular.

Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) and Education for All have common roots. Both are based on a commitment to the empowerment of local people to work together to secure access to basic human rights whether to education or health. Both arise from the failure of existing institutions and traditional services to deliver health, rehabilitation or education services in ways that meet the needs of those they are meant to serve. New ways have to be found of empowering local people to acquire some of the skills which have hitherto been the preserve of expensively trained and often inaccessible professionals.

Brian O'Toole's paper shows how CBR and EFA must in future be seen as complementary at every level – from the village school to Ministers for health, education, social welfare and employment. Collaboration at grassroots level can be achieved without high-level political initiatives, but they are greatly strengthened by a national commitment to a joint approach. Sustainability depends on this.

Today, there is a greater realization of the prime importance of a joint approach among the responsible Ministries at all levels. The artificial barriers dividing different agencies and different professionals are beginning to be dismantled at every level but the pace of progress is still slow.

O'Toole's paper summarizes experience from a number of countries that are successfully developing CBR projects not just for a few communities but on a large scale. He describes successful outreach programmes in Burundi, Ghana, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, the Philippines, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe, and provides a more detailed account of how the Guyana CBR project has developed.

CBR is not a panacea, nor does it provide a universal template for the future. On the contrary, unrealistic and sentimental reliance on CBR can do a disservice to its aims by discounting the serious social and economic obstacles to successful implementation. These include poverty, overwork and exhaustion on the part of families, professional vested interests, lack of official support and above all the severe risk that CBR projects find it difficult to survive after the ending of external funding from government or an international aid agency.

Despite many positive examples of success, O'Toole concludes that 'the real test of CBR has yet to come'. He asks 'Can CBR expand beyond a relatively small-scale, home-based teaching programme into a nationwide community care programme?'

One way of doing so is to join forces with similar initiatives in education, specifically the movement for EFA and inclusive education. At local level, this would mean, for example, that CBR workers would liaise with the local school at an early stage, discussing ways in which a pre-school child could be prepared for and finally be admitted to the school, and anticipate any changes which might need to be made and any additional supports which might be needed.

The family provides a natural link between CBR activities and school. But, as already indicated, some families lack the confidence to approach schools, just as not all schools welcome parents of children with disabilities.

O'Toole comments encouragingly that 'some of the most creative examples of parental-professional partnerships have come from the poorest nations. It may be a case of the developed world looking south for innovative approaches to meeting the challenge of working with disabled persons.

As we move towards a new century there is a growing realisation of the need for a new concept of development. A top-down model of service delivery is becoming increasingly discredited. There is growing recognition that if the subjects of innovation do not participate actively in the relationship with those who would promote the development process, change will be impossible. One of the basic questions now becomes how we can guide individuals who, for so long, have traditionally been led by others, to take charge of their own affairs. We need to move away from regarding rehabilitation as a product to be dispensed, to offering rehabilitation as a process in which villagers are intimately involved.

O'Toole, 1990

The role of parents

Just as parents are at the heart of CBR, so they must be at the centre of the inclusive education movement for their own children and for others. Indeed, parents provide a single focus both for CBR and for inclusive education.

Alain Parvilliers' presentation draws on his family's experience and sets out a wide range of roles and tasks which parents might undertake. He is convinced of the value of partnership, and optimistic and confident about the outcomes of collaboration. Parents and professionals need each other, and neither can make significant and sustainable progress alone.

He stresses that the first need of parents is for information which is honest and accurate, and which contains positive suggestions for action. It is at the stage of implementing suggestions for action, whether they come from professionals or from the parents' own sense of what can be done, that parents first need partners.

Parvilliers describes a journey taken by many parents with a child who has a severe disability. At first, they conscientiously followed the suggestions for assessing and stimulating development made by the professionals. But after a while, they grew more confident in making their own observations and in making their own decisions about teaching and developmental objectives, as well in assessing priorities about what were the most important tasks for their child to reach.

The confidence and competence which arose from his successful experiences of partnership led him to another level of contact with professionals – that of trainer. He joined forces with other parents, first at local, then national and finally international level through the

International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap.

Initially, the aim of local parents was to reduce the 'element of chance' in obtaining support and appropriate help for themselves and for their child. He sees the role of national bodies in terms of pioneering innovations and as guardians of the quality of public services and, occasionally, as direct service providers.

Parvilliers' contribution raises some challenging issues for all parents and professionals. One thing is certain: even the largest and most successful of national parents' organizations started from very small beginnings – perhaps a few parents meeting in one another's homes, moving on from there to setting up a small programme for pre-school or school-age children, a vocational training centre or group home. From these origins they developed towards a national and international advocacy role.

The fundamental lesson to be drawn is that nothing should be done without the participation of families and that families need support and recognition in their task.

The role of voluntary organisations

In looking back over the development of non-governmental organisations, William Brohier traces three phases.

- The original charity model
- Technical assistance which transplants concepts and services from one country, culture and set of social conditions to another – this has elsewhere been called 'the culture-immune deficiency syndrome' (CIDS).
- A partnership model which has at least some of the following elements:
 - 1) The programme should be developmentally based and should have sustainability built in from the start.
 - 2) The receiving partner should have ownership of the programme which should be needs-based and needs-led. In other words, donors should not impose their ideas and practices, subtly or otherwise.
 - 3) Organizations of disabled people must be empowered through positions of responsibility and leadership to make decisions and be given whatever support is necessary to enable them to do so.
 - 4) Assistance must be appropriate to local conditions and complement locally available resources.

Because many non-governmental organisations contain elements of all four stages, it is important for the executive boards to develop a clear sense both of their mission and of their methodology for implementation. This implies that board members must be able to rethink their aims and mode of operation in the light of both new developments and the social and cultural contexts in which they are or will be working. It is also essential for such boards to include members with personal experience of disability.

Brohier stresses that a non-governmental organisation should be dynamic and move with the times, but that changes should be well founded and relevant. For example, a successful non-governmental organisation can be seduced into the role of service provider by offers of substantial government funding either for specific projects (for instance schools) or for the general running of the organization

(such as payments for salaried staff and travel expenses of executive committee). While such offers are tempting and may provide services for disabled people, they allow governments to escape from the responsibility of providing such services themselves which in turn can lead to further isolation and marginalization.

At the international level, the larger consultative inter-governmental organisations have since 1981 worked together to act in an advisory capacity to the United Nations organizations concerned with disability. These include Disabled Persons International, the International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap, Rehabilitation International, the World Blind Union, the World Federation of the Deaf, the World Veterans Association and the International Council on Disability, the last now representing many non-governmental organisations for whom disability is only one element of their work (such as Red Cross) and the main professional associations (such as Occupational Therapy, etc.).

The NGO decision-making body must include the parents of children with disabilities and/or adults who are themselves disabled, not because the disability automatically qualifies them for membership but in view of the valuable insights they can share from personal experience and the crucial inputs they have a right to provide for planning and programming of special needs education and rehabilitation services.

Brohier

Role of donor agencies

Kerstin Rosencrantz gave an account of the work of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), one of a number of government aid agencies playing a catalytic and strategic role in international disability work. SIDA works largely through mainly Swedish NGOs working with NGOs in developing countries, mainly for capacity-building purposes within these organizations. 'The most useful contribution we can make is through financing institutional co-operation with institutions in Sweden rather than through recruitment of individual experts.'

SIDA also works directly with United Nations agencies, including WHO, UNICEF, ILO and UNESCO, strongly supports community-based rehabilitation and inclusive education, and

seeks to stimulate the necessary changes in staff training to realize these goals.

Rosencrantz outlined the gradual increase in SIDA's involvement in disability in developing countries. At present, SIDA co-operates bilaterally with fifteen countries and is funding the development of teaching materials, including materials in braille and large print, as well as relevant microtechnology.

Role of organizations of disabled persons

Deng Pu Fang, Chairman of the China Disabled Persons Federation (CDPF), drew a parallel between the emancipation of disabled people and the struggle for emancipation by nations and by women.

'Today, the human society has progressed to such a stage that, like the emancipation of nations and women, the emancipation of disabled persons has become an urgent and arduous task facing the international community [...] Facts have demonstrated repeatedly that people with disabilities can definitely become creators of the wealth of mankind, so long as they are provided with proper education and employment opportunities, with their values respected and their potential fully tapped. The key to reaching this goal lies in the improvement of the qualifications of disabled persons themselves, which means that the right to education of disabled persons must be fully protected. We believe that organisations of disabled persons [...] should play an important role in realising the objective of Education for All.'

Deng Pu Fang provided an account of the development of services for disabled persons in the People's Republic of China and particularly CDPF's role.

CDPF is a semi-governmental organization and integrates functions of representation, service planning, and delivery and administration. It has local branches all over the country, operating at all levels, including the neighbourhood. In 1993, the State Council established a National Co-ordinating Committee on Disability.

CDPF gives high priority to campaigns to improve public attitudes to disabled people, making full use of journalists, the media and the press to publicize the achievements of disabled people and to portray them in a positive light.

China is also active in providing international and regional leadership in the field of disability. China is one of the eight countries taking part in UNESCO's *Special Needs in the Classroom* project (see p.42). Beijing also hosted the launch of the Asian Decade of Disabled Persons in 1992.

Summary of discussions groups

The theme of community perspectives was further explored in group discussions with focus on vocational education and preparation for adult life, schooling as a component of CBR and the role of parents

Preparation for adult life

Reference to the importance of continuity of planning of provision between school and post-school provision was made by several speakers throughout the conference.

The contribution by Luis Reguera of the International Labour Office (ILO) developed this theme in greater detail. He stressed that preparation for adult life is one of the principal aims of schooling for all students and that

disabled students had even more need than others of a period of structured and targeted preparation for employment and for becoming contributing citizens of their community.

However, vocational preparation and training faced major obstacles. These included:

- high rates of unemployment and the economic recession
- failure to apply and enforce employment quotas
- underestimation by teachers, parents and the public of the abilities of disabled people to take up competitive paid employment
- a lack of appreciation by schools and educationalists of the importance of vocational preparation

Examples from Spain and Argentina illustrated some of the elements of successful practice.

- The foundations of pre-vocational education needed to be laid in schools
- Work experience had to be provided while still at school to introduce young people to the world of work
- Co-ordination was needed between education and employment authorities at local and national level
- Vocational training must be related to local employment potential
- NGOs should be encouraged to create sheltered work opportunities
- Better working relationships need to be established with families, community agencies, trade unions and organizations of disabled people

Schooling as a component in Community-Based Rehabilitation

Ture Jonsson's (United Nations Development Programme – UNDP) introductory remarks highlighted the fact that CBR and inclusive education should be seen as two complementary approaches – both are reaching the unreached in different ways. The two approaches should converge once the child is old enough to go to school.

The discussions were enriched with concrete field experiences from Ghana and Benin. Ghana provides a rare example of a national initiative and a concerted multi-sectoral approach of joint working by different Ministries – Education, Health, Employment and Social Affairs (the latter assuming leading and coordinating role). This was matched at the level of the United Nations organizations – UNESCO, WHO and ILO, with UNDP as the facilitating funding agency. Norwegian and Swedish NGOs are equal partners providing financial and technical support (NAD, SHIA). The Ghana Federation of the Disabled plays an action role in the development of the project.

Collaboration between different agencies and at the different levels is perhaps the main distinctive feature of the CBR programme in Ghana. A great deal of attention was also paid to publicity and awareness raising in the general population and among staff of all the organizations and agencies involved.

Careful attention to staff training was another important feature of the project. A management team was created which underwent a six-week sensitization and preparation course, with financial support from Norway. Two pilot project areas were selected, some peripatetic teachers selected who were given two courses of training, one lasting for four weeks, the second

for three-weeks. A group of social welfare officers were also given a three week training in CBR and related topics. The training was non-categorical, emphasizing elements common to all disabilities. Use was also made of WHO's CBR training manual *Training Disabled Persons in the Community*, as well as the UNESCO teacher Education Resource Pack: *Special Needs in the Classroom*.

In Benin, the CBR programme was initiated by the Ministries of Labour and Health, in co-operation with WHO and a French NGO (Comité National Français de Liaison pour la Réadaptation des Handicapés). Unlike the Ghana project, the programme started in a small locality.

'In Benin, disabled children are viewed as either a curse or as a gift from God.'

Consciousness-raising at community level was therefore fundamental. Other essential elements include:

- preparation of the child before starting school
- anticipate need for physical changes to classroom
- regular meeting with parents
- planned transportation of children

The scheme was judged successful, despite very large classes (seventy to ninety children) and an absence of legislation to support inclusion. After a pilot period of two years (1989-1991), positive results were noted in the attitudes towards the participation of disabled people in the life of the community and a greater use of ordinary schools by parents. Financing and administration are located at both national and local levels. By 1992, some 450 people with disabilities were included in the programme and there

are plans to extend the programme to other part of the country.

In open discussion, further examples of links between CBR and inclusive education were given by participants. In Madagascar, emphasis was also on training peripatetic teachers and on changing schools to meet individual needs rather than the reverse. This includes broadening the role of specialist teachers.

Uganda is developing Child-to-Child programmes in over 100 schools. Children pass on key points about disability to other children, to their families and to teachers. An account of the use made of the UNESCO Pack Special Needs in the Classroom (page 42) was provided by Anupan Ahuja, one of the co-ordinators of the UNESCO training programme in India. She highlighted teacher training initiatives in Ghana and India aiming at improving schools for all children in their local communities.

Parents as partners

In introducing this session, the chairperson, Maria Luisa de Ramon Laca, stressed that we had hardly made a start in harnessing the potential of parents and families in working in partnership with teachers and other professionals, and that there was much to be learned from examples of good practice in both developed and developing countries.

Trijnte de Wit Gosker (Netherlands) suggested that as parents were the first experts on their child, it was time to begin talking about professionals as partners, rather than the reverse. The key for co-operation is mutual respect and acceptance; human rather than professional relationships.

Teachers need information from parents in order to do their job. This calls for equal partnership, based on trust and respect as

fellow human beings, rather than on hierarchical differences. Parents must have the right to choose which school their child should attend. This means that they must be given enough information to enable them to decide on the relative merits of special or ordinary schools for their child.

The goal of equal partnership frequently encounters obstacles. Just as some parents were afraid of teachers, the reverse was also quite common. There was a history of ignorance and mistrust; the subject of parents and parental involvement was hardly ever mentioned in the initial or even the later training of teachers. In the Netherlands, there are now opportunities for parents and teachers to undertake joint training. Discussion emphasizes the contribution of all members of the family, not just the mother, – fathers, brothers and sisters, and grandparents.

Dr Dawn Hunter (United States) referred to the increasing role of parents in the United States in affecting both the planning and the quality of services. Professionals needed training in learning to listen to parents and giving them time and space to communicate and participate in their own way.

Inclusive schools employ a co-ordinated service delivery model in which teachers, parents and related service personnel for instance psychologists, speech and language therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists and health professionals) work collaboratively to assess student needs and provide appropriate interventions in naturally occurring contexts.

Theme 4: Partnership and networking

One of the greatest benefits of regional and international conferences lies in the opportunities provided to learn from the experiences of others and to think about possible lessons to be learned from such experiences. Unfortunately, there never seems to be enough time at conferences to discuss such experiences or to pursue specific questions.

The final theme of the conference was therefore devoted to a description of a number of opportunities which now exist to develop new collaborative networks or to make better use of existing networks. The session provided a few illustrative examples of partnership and networking possibilities but many others exist which are not being used to the best effect.

Victor Ordoñez, representative of the Director-General of UNESCO at the Conference, concluded this session by highlighting a number of general principles:

- (i) To be efficient, partnership and networking must be considered as a means rather than as an end. The aim is to develop and strengthen inclusive education. It is results that count.

The essence of networking is the sharing of information. But even more important is how the information is understood and interpreted, and the use to which it is put. It helps to collect and use information for specific projects or purposes in a short-term and mission-oriented context. Large bureaucracies tend to absorb but not digest or assimilate incoming information.

- (ii) Networking and partnership work best at the local level. Bridges need to be built between the macro and the micro levels. For example, networks are needed involving schools, local authorities and the national level.

Four main elements are involved in moving from the international to the local level:

- Capacity building
- Information exchange
- Clarifying (special needs) policy
- Economies of scale that suit local conditions

- (iii) Use existing networks and initiatives.

Education for All is the most relevant example in the present context where monitoring and follow-up mechanisms already exist which can all be used to promote special needs education and the outcomes of this conference. These include the EFA Forum and regional initiatives such as APEID and APEAL.

Ordoñez stressed that this was a good moment to work for significant change and that networking represented one way to make progress.

Three elements were essential:

- Means and money
- Capacity-building and know-how
- Political will

But networking should not involve only educationalists. In order to succeed, there has to be a much wider involvement of the media, representatives of the community and of local authorities, and above all accredited representatives of organizations of disabled persons.

UNESCO can help to unlock the doors to better networking. For example, regional offices of UNESCO can actively facilitate networking and collaboration between and within countries and also with regional offices of other United Nations organizations, such as WHO, ILO and UNICEF, as well as with the relevant international NGOs.

European Union (Socrates and Helios programmes)

Domenico Lenarduzzi summarized current European initiatives in the field of special needs education and transition to work. These include a computerized database (HANDYNET), possibilities of exchange and information sharing among exemplary programmes in the member states and contributions to evaluation.

The action of the European Union is conducted at three levels:

- co-operation between education and training systems
- quality promotion through pedagogical and technological innovation
- specific direct actions at community level

The above is realized through the creation of transnational partner networks, physical and intellectual mobility and exchange, and elaboration of common transnational projects.

One example of these actions is the Helios programme for the integration into the education of young people with special needs.

Partnerships between non-governmental organisations and governments and grass roots organisations

Jez Stoner of Save the Children Fund (UK) gave a presentation on partnerships between NGOs and community-based-organisations. He stressed that the strength of NGOs lies in their value base, their independence from political or other interests, their small size and flexibility. NGOs are able to work more closely with communities and to do so in a more supportive manner. Their flexibility and size enable them to respond faster and more flexibly, to experiment with new ideas and to take risks.

International NGOs such as Save the Children have the added advantage of being able to exchange and move ideas and networks across national boundaries. In terms of lobbying and influencing, they also have much greater freedom of access to policy-and decision-makers, in developed countries. They can lobby for changes at the global level with bilateral and multilateral donors and governments. NGOs are also able to use the experience of staff across different regions of the world.

By way of example, Stoner described the work of Save the Children in Thailand in influencing government policy on the implementation of inclusive education within the framework of universal primary education. The policy is to strengthen all relevant sectors – including the Ministry of Education, primary education, teacher training and special education, as well as NGOs – through lessons learned from pilot projects, advocacy, training and co-ordination. Save the Children has also supported implementation of the UNESCO project *Special Needs in the Classroom*.

What is required is a commitment and political will to bring about change – change in human attitudes and behaviour, and the modification of development strategies. Through Education for All, it should be possible to enable all human beings – including the disabled – to develop their full potential, to contribute to society and, above all to be enriched by their difference and not devalued. In our world constituted of differences of all kinds, it is not the disabled but society at large that needs special education in order to become a genuine society for all.

FEDERICO MAYOR
Director General, UNESCO

4

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

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Introduction

1. This **Framework for Action on Special Needs Education** was adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education organized by the Government of Spain in co-operation with UNESCO and held in Salamanca from 7 to 10 June 1994. Its purpose is to inform policy and guide action by governments, international organizations, national aid agencies, non-governmental organizations and other bodies in implementing the **Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education**. The **Framework** draws extensively upon the national experience of the participating countries as well as upon resolutions, recommendations and publications of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, especially the **Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities**¹. It also takes account of the proposals, guidelines and recommendations arising from the five regional seminars held to prepare the World Conference.
2. The right of every child to an education is proclaimed in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and was forcefully reaffirmed by the **World Declaration on Education for All**. Every person with a disability has a right to express their wishes with regard to their education, as far as this can be ascertained. Parents have an inherent right to be consulted on the form of education best suited to the needs, circumstances and aspirations of their children.
3. The guiding principle that informs this **Framework** is that schools should accommodate **all children** regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups. These conditions create a range of different challenges to school systems. In the context of this Framework, the term 'special educational needs' refers to all those children and youth whose needs arise from disabilities or learning difficulties. Many children experience learning difficulties and thus have special educational needs at some time during their schooling. Schools have to find ways of successfully educating all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities. There is an emerging consensus that children and youth with special educational needs should be included in the educational arrangements made for the majority of children. This has led to the concept of the inclusive school. The challenge confronting the inclusive school is that of developing a child-centred pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children, including

¹ United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, A/RES/48/96, United Nations Resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its 48th session on 20 December 1993.

those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities. The merit of such schools is not only that they are capable of providing quality education to all children; their establishment is a crucial step in helping to change discriminatory attitudes, in creating welcoming communities and in developing an inclusive society. A change in social perspective is imperative. For far too long, the problems of people with disabilities have been compounded by a disabling society that has focused upon their impairments rather than their potential.

4. Special needs education incorporates the proven principles of sound pedagogy from which all children may benefit. It assumes that human differences are normal and that learning must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child rather than the child fitted to preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process. A child-centred pedagogy is beneficial to all students and, as a consequence, to society as a whole. Experience has demonstrated that it can substantially reduce the drop-out and repetition that are so much a part of many education systems while ensuring higher average levels of achievement. A child-centred pedagogy can help to avoid the waste of resources and the shattering of hopes that is all too frequently a consequence of poor quality instruction and a 'one size fits all' mentality towards education. Child-centred schools are, moreover, the training ground for a people-oriented society that respects both the differences and the dignity of all human beings.
5. This **Framework for Action** comprises the following sections:
 - I. New thinking in special needs education
 - II. Guidelines for action at the national level
 - A. Policy and organization
 - B. School factors
 - C. Recruitment and training of educational personnel
 - D. External support services
 - E. Priority areas
 - F. Community perspectives
 - G. Resource requirements
 - III. Guidelines for action at the regional and international level.

I New Thinking in Special Needs Education

6. The trend in social policy during the past two decades has been to promote integration and participation and to combat exclusion. Inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights. Within the field of education, this is reflected in the development of strategies that seek to bring about a genuine equalization of opportunity. Experience in many countries demonstrates that the integration of children and youth with special educational needs is best achieved within inclusive schools that serve all children within a community. It is within this context that those with special educational needs can achieve the fullest educational progress and social integration. While inclusive schools provide a favourable setting for achieving equal opportunity and full participation, their success requires a concerted effort, not only by teachers and school staff, but also by peers, parents, families and volunteers. The reform of social institutions is not only a technical task; it depends, above all, upon the conviction, commitment and good will of the individuals who constitute society.
7. The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school.
8. Within inclusive schools, children with special educational needs should receive whatever extra support they may require to ensure their effective education. Inclusive schooling is the most effective means for building solidarity between children with special needs and their peers. Assignment of children to special schools – or special classes or sections within a school on a permanent basis – should be the exception, to be recommended only in those infrequent cases where it is clearly demonstrated that education in regular classrooms is incapable of meeting a child's educational or social needs or when it is required for the welfare of the child or that of other children.
9. The situation regarding special needs education varies enormously from one country to another. There are, for example, countries that have well established systems of special schools for those with specific impairments. Such special schools can represent a valuable resource for the development of inclusive schools. The staff

of these special institutions possess the expertise needed for early screening and identification of children with disabilities. Special schools can also serve as training and resource centres for staff in regular schools. Finally, special schools or units within inclusive schools – may continue to provide the most suitable education for the relatively small number of children with disabilities who cannot be adequately served in regular classrooms or schools. Investment in existing special schools should be geared to their new and expanded role of providing professional support to regular schools in meeting special educational needs. An important contribution to ordinary schools, which the staff of special schools can make, is to the matching of curricular content and method to the individual needs of pupils.

10. Countries that have few or no special schools would, in general, be well advised to concentrate their efforts on the development of inclusive schools and the specialized services needed to enable them to serve the vast majority of children and youth – especially provision of teacher training in special needs education and the establishment of suitably staffed and equipped resource centres to which schools could turn for support. Experience, especially in developing countries, indicates that the high cost of special schools means, in practice, that only a small minority of students, usually an urban élite, benefit from them. The vast majority of students with special needs, especially in rural areas, are as a consequence provided with no services whatsoever. Indeed, in many developing countries, it is estimated that fewer than 1 per cent of children with special educational needs are included in existing provision. Experience, moreover, suggests that inclusive schools, serving all of the children in a community, are most successful in eliciting community support and in finding imaginative and innovative ways of using the limited resources that are available.
11. Educational planning by governments should concentrate on education for **all** persons, in **all** regions of a country and in **all** economic conditions, through both public and private schools.
12. Because in the past relatively few children with disabilities have had access to education, especially in the developing regions of the world, there are millions of adults with disabilities who lack even the rudiments of a basic education. A concerted effort is thus required to teach literacy, numeracy and basic skills to persons with disabilities through adult education programmes.

13. It is particularly important to recognize that women have often been doubly disadvantaged, bias based on gender compounding the difficulties caused by their disabilities. Women and men should have equal influence on the design of educational programmes and the same opportunities to benefit from them. Special efforts should be made to encourage the participation of girls and women with disabilities in educational programmes.
14. This **Framework** is intended as an overall guide to planning action in special needs education. It evidently cannot take account of the vast variety of situations encountered in the different regions and countries of the world and must, accordingly, be adapted to fit local requirements and circumstances. To be effective, it must be complemented by national, regional and local plans of action inspired by a political and popular will to achieve **education for all**.

II Guidelines for Action at the National Level

A. Policy and organization

15. *Integrated education and community-based rehabilitation represent complementary and mutually supportive approaches to serving those with special needs. Both are based upon the principles of inclusion, integration and participation, and represent well-tested and cost-effective approaches to promoting equality of access for those with special educational needs as part of a nationwide strategy aimed at achieving **education for all**. Countries are invited to consider the following actions concerning the policy and organization of their education systems.*
16. Legislation should recognize the principle of equality of opportunity for children, youth and adults with disabilities in primary, secondary and tertiary education carried out, in so far as possible, in integrated settings.
17. Parallel and complementary legislative measures should be adopted in the fields of health, social welfare, vocational training and employment in order to support and give full effect to educational legislation.
18. Educational policies at all levels, from the national to the local, should stipulate that a child with a disability should attend the neighbourhood school that is, the school that would be attended if the child did not have a disability. Exceptions to this rule should be considered on a case-by-case basis where only education in a special school or establishment can be shown to meet the needs of the individual child.
19. The practice of 'mainstreaming' children with disabilities should be an integral part of national plans for achieving **education for all**. Even in those exceptional cases where children are placed in special schools, their education need not be entirely segregated. Part-time attendance at regular schools should be encouraged. Necessary provision should also be made for ensuring inclusion of youth and adults with special needs in secondary and higher education as well as in training programmes. Special attention should be given to ensuring equality of access and opportunity for girls and women with disabilities.
20. Special attention should be paid to the needs of children and youth with severe or multiple disabilities. They have the same rights as others in the community to the achievement of maximum independence as adults and should be educated to the best of their potential towards that end.

21. Educational policies should take full account of individual differences and situations. The importance of sign language as the medium of communication among the deaf, for example, should be recognized and provision made to ensure that all deaf persons have access to education in their national sign language. Owing to the particular communication needs of deaf and deaf/blind persons, their education may be more suitably provided in special schools or special classes and units in mainstream schools.
22. Community-based rehabilitation should be developed as part of a global strategy for supporting cost-effective education and training for people with special educational needs. Community-based rehabilitation should be seen as a specific approach within community development aimed at rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social integration of all people with disabilities; it should be implemented through the combined efforts of people with disabilities themselves, their families and communities, and the appropriate education, health, vocational and welfare services.
23. Both policies and financing arrangements should encourage and facilitate the development of inclusive schools. Barriers that impede movement from special to regular schools should be removed and a common administrative structure organized. Progress towards inclusion should be carefully monitored through the collection of statistics capable of revealing the number of students with disabilities who benefit from resources, expertise and equipment intended for special needs education as well as the number of students with special educational needs enrolled in regular schools.
24. Co-ordination between educational authorities and those responsible for health, employment and social services should be strengthened at all levels to bring about convergence and complementarity. Planning and co-ordination should also take account of the actual and potential role that semi-public agencies and non-governmental organizations can play. A particular effort needs to be made to elicit community support in meeting special educational needs.
25. National authorities have a responsibility to monitor external funding to special needs education and, working in co-operation with their international partners, to ensure that it corresponds to national priorities and policies aimed at achieving **education for all**. Bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, for their part, should carefully consider national policies in respect of special needs education in planning and implementing programmes in education and related fields.

B. School factors

26. *Developing inclusive schools that cater for a wide range of pupils in both urban and rural areas requires: the articulation of a clear and forceful policy on inclusion together with adequate financial provision – an effective public information effort to combat prejudice and create informed and positive attitudes – an extensive programme of orientation and staff training – and the provision of necessary support services. Changes in all the following aspects of schooling, as well as many others, are necessary to contribute to the success of inclusive schools: curriculum, buildings, school organization, pedagogy, assessment, staffing, school ethos and extra-curricular activities.*
27. Most of the required changes do not relate exclusively to the inclusion of children with special educational needs. They are part of a wider reform of education needed to improve its quality and relevance and to promote higher levels of learning achievement by all pupils. The **World Declaration on Education for All** underscored the need for a child-centred approach aimed at ensuring the successful schooling of all children. The adoption of more flexible, adaptive systems capable of taking fuller account of the different needs of children will contribute both to educational success and inclusion. The following guidelines focus on points to be considered in integrating children with special educational needs into inclusive schools.

Curriculum flexibility

28. Curricula should be adapted to children's needs, not vice-versa. Schools should therefore provide curricular opportunities to suit children with different abilities and interests.
29. Children with special needs should receive additional instructional support in the context of the regular curriculum, not a different curriculum. The guiding principle should be to provide all children with the same education, providing additional assistance and support to children requiring it.

30. The acquisition of knowledge is not only a matter of formal and theoretical instruction. The content of education should be geared to high standards and the needs of individuals with a view to enabling them to participate fully in development. Teaching should be related to pupils' own experience and to practical concerns in order to motivate them better.
31. In order to follow the progress of each child, assessment procedures should be reviewed. Formative evaluation should be incorporated into the regular educational process in order to keep pupils and teachers informed of the learning mastery attained as well as to identify difficulties and assist pupils to overcome them.
32. For children with special educational needs a continuum of support should be provided, ranging from minimal help in regular classrooms to additional learning support programmes within the school and extending, where necessary, to the provision of assistance from specialist teachers and external support staff.
33. Appropriate and affordable technology should be used when necessary to enhance success in the school curriculum and to aid communication, mobility and learning. Technical aids can be offered in a more economical and effective way if they are provided from a central pool in each locality, where there is expertise in matching aids to individual needs and in ensuring maintenance.
34. Capability should be built up and research carried out at national and regional levels to develop appropriate support technology systems for special needs education. States that have ratified the Florence Agreement should be encouraged to use this instrument to facilitate the free circulation of materials and equipment related to the needs of people with disabilities. Concurrently States that have not adhered to the Agreement are invited to do so in order to facilitate the free circulation of services and goods of educational and cultural nature.

School management

35. Local administrators and school heads can play a major role in making schools more responsive to children with special educational needs if they are given necessary authority and adequate training to do so. They should be invited to develop more flexible management procedures, to redeploy instructional resources, to diversify learning options, to mobilize child-to-child help, to offer support to pupils experiencing difficulties and to develop close relations with parents and the community. Successful school management depends upon the active and creative involvement of teachers and staff, and the development of effective co-operation and team work to meet the needs of students.
36. School heads have a special responsibility in promoting positive attitudes throughout the school community and in arranging for effective co-operation between class teachers and support staff. Appropriate arrangements for support and the exact role to be played by various partners in the educational process should be decided through consultation and negotiation.
37. Each school should be a community collectively accountable for the success or failure of every student. The educational team, rather than the individual teacher, should share the responsibility for the education of special needs children. Parents and volunteers should be invited to take an active part in the work of the school. Teachers, however, play a key role as the managers of the educational process, supporting children through the use of available resources both within and outside of the classroom.

Information and research

38. The dissemination of examples of good practice could help to improve teaching and learning. Information on relevant research findings would also be valuable. Pooling of experience and the development of documentation centres should be supported at national level, and access to sources of information broadened.
39. Special needs education should be integrated into the research and development programmes of research institutions and curriculum development centres. Particular attention should be given in this area to action-research focusing on innovative teaching-learning strategies. Classroom teachers should participate actively in both the action and reflection involved in such inquiries. Pilot experiments and in-depth studies should also be launched to assist in decision-making and in guiding future action. These experiments and studies could be carried out on a co-operative basis by several countries.

C. Recruitment and training of educational personnel

40. *Appropriate preparation of all educational personnel stands out as a key factor in promoting progress towards inclusive schools. Furthermore, the importance of recruiting teachers with disabilities who can serve as role models for children with disabilities is increasingly recognized. The following actions could be taken.*
41. Pre-service training programmes should provide to all student teachers, primary and secondary alike, positive orientation toward disability, thereby developing an understanding of what can be achieved in schools with locally available support services. The knowledge and skills required are mainly those of good teaching and include assessing special needs, adapting curriculum content, utilizing assistive technology, individualizing teaching procedures to suit a larger range of abilities, etc. In teacher-training practice schools, specific attention should be given to preparing all teachers to exercise their autonomy and apply their skills in adapting curricula and instruction to meet pupils needs as well as to collaborate with specialists and co-operate with parents.
42. The skills required to respond to special educational needs should be taken into account during assessment of studies and teacher certification.
43. As a matter of priority, written materials should be prepared and seminars organized for local administrators, supervisors, headteachers and senior teachers to develop their capacity to provide leadership in this area and to support and train less-experienced teaching staff.
44. The major challenge lies in providing in-service training to all teachers, taking into account the varied and often difficult conditions under which they serve. In-service training should, wherever possible, be developed at school level by means of interaction with trainers and supported by distance education and other self-instruction techniques.
45. Specialized training in special needs education leading to additional qualifications should normally be integrated with or preceded by training and experience as a regular education teacher in order to ensure complementarity and mobility.

46. The training of special teachers needs to be reconsidered with a view to enabling them to work in different settings and to play a key role in special educational needs programmes. A non-categorical approach encompassing all types of disabilities should be developed as a common core, prior to further specialization in one or more disability-specific areas.
47. Universities have a major advisory role to play in the process of developing special needs education, especially as regards research, evaluation, preparation of teacher trainers, and designing training programmes and materials. Networking among universities and institutions of higher learning in developed and developing countries should be promoted. Linking research and training in this way is of great significance. It is also important to actively involve people with disabilities in research and training roles in order to ensure that their perspectives are taken fully into account.
48. A recurrent problem with education systems, even those that provide excellent educational services for students with disabilities, is the lack of role models for such students. Special needs students require opportunities to interact with adults with disabilities who have achieved success so that they can pattern their own lifestyles and aspirations on realistic expectations. In addition, students with disabilities should be given training and provided with examples of disability empowerment and leadership so that they can assist in shaping the policies that will affect them in later life. Education systems should therefore seek to recruit qualified teachers and other educational personnel who have disabilities and should also seek to involve successful individuals with disabilities from within the region in the education of special needs children.

D. External support services

49. *Provision of support services is of paramount importance for the success of inclusive educational policies. In order to ensure that, at all levels, external services are made available to children with special needs, educational authorities should consider the following.*
50. Support to ordinary schools could be provided by both teacher-education institutions and by the outreach staff of special schools. The latter should be used increasingly as resource centres for ordinary schools offering direct support to those children with special educational needs. Both training institutions and special schools can provide access to specific devices and materials as well as training in instructional strategies that are not provided in regular classrooms.
51. External support by resource personnel from various agencies, departments and institutions, such as advisory teachers, educational psychologists, speech and occupational therapists, etc., should be co-ordinated at the local level. School clusters have proved a useful strategy in mobilizing educational resources as well as community involvement. Clusters of schools could be assigned collective responsibility for meeting the special educational needs of pupils in their area and given scope for allocating resources as required. Such arrangements should involve non-educational services as well. Indeed, experience suggests that education services would benefit significantly if greater efforts were made to ensure optimal use of all available expertise and resources.

E. Priority areas

52. *Integration of children and young people with special educational needs would be more effective and successful if special consideration were given in educational development plans to the following target areas: early childhood education to enhance the educability of all children, girls' education and the transition from education to adult working life.*

Early childhood education

53. The success of the inclusive school depends considerably on early identification, assessment and stimulation of the very young child with special educational needs. Early childhood care and education programmes for children aged up to 6 years ought to be developed and/or reoriented to promote physical, intellectual and social development and school readiness. These programmes have a major economic value for the individual, the family and the society in preventing the aggravation of disabling conditions. Programmes at this level should recognize the principle of inclusion and be developed in a comprehensive way by combining pre-school activities and early childhood health care.
54. Many countries have adopted policies in favour of early childhood education, either by supporting the development of kindergartens and day nurseries or by organizing family information and awareness activities in conjunction with community services (health, maternal and infant care), schools and local family or women's associations.

Girls' education

55. Girls with disabilities are doubly disadvantaged. A special effort is required to provide training and education for girls with special educational needs. In addition to gaining access to school, girls with disabilities should have access to information and guidance as well as to models which could help them to make realistic choices and preparation for their future role as adult women.

Preparation for adult life

56. Young people with special educational needs should be helped to make an effective transition from school to adult working life. Schools should assist them to become economically active and provide them with the skills needed in everyday life, offering training in skills which respond to the social and communication demands and expectations of adult life. This calls for appropriate training technologies, including direct experience in real life situations outside school. Curricula for students with special educational needs in senior classes should include specific transitional programmes, support to enter higher education whenever possible and subsequent vocational training preparing them to function as independent, contributing members of their communities after leaving school. These activities should be carried out with the active involvement of vocational guidance counsellors, placement offices, trade unions, local authorities, and the different services and agencies concerned.

Adult and continuing education

57. Persons with disabilities should be given special attention in the design and implementation of adult and continuing education programmes. Persons with disabilities should be given priority access to such programmes. Special courses should also be designed to suit the needs and conditions of different groups of adults with disabilities.

F. Community perspectives

58. *Realizing the goal of successful education of children with special educational needs is not the task of the Ministries of Education and schools alone. It requires the co-operation of families, and the mobilization of the community and voluntary organizations as well as the support of the public-at-large. Experience from countries or areas that have witnessed progress in equalizing educational opportunities for children and youth with special educational needs suggests several useful lessons.*

Parent partnership

59. The education of children with special educational needs is a shared task of parents and professionals. A positive attitude on the part of parents favours school and social integration. Parents need support in order to assume the role of a parent of a child with special needs. The role of families and parents could be enhanced by the provision of necessary information in simple and clear language; addressing the needs for information and training in parenting skills is a particularly important task in cultural environments where there is little tradition of schooling. Both parents and teachers may need support and encouragement in learning to work together as equal partners.
60. Parents are privileged partners as regards the special educational needs of their child, and to the extent possible should be accorded the choice in the type of education provision they desire for their child.
61. A co-operative, supportive partnership between school administrators, teachers and parents should be developed and parents regarded as active partners in decision-making. Parents should be encouraged to participate in educational activities at home and at school (where they could observe effective techniques and learn how to organize extra-curricular activities), as well as in the supervision and support of their children's learning.
62. Governments should take a lead in promoting parental partnership, through both statements of policy and legislation concerning parental rights. The development of parents' associations should be promoted and their representatives involved in the design and implementation of programmes intended to enhance the education of their children. Organizations of people with disabilities should also be consulted concerning the design and implementation of programmes.

Community involvement

63. Decentralization and local-area-based planning favours greater involvement of communities in education and training of people with special educational needs. Local administrators should encourage community participation by giving support to representative associations and inviting them to take part in decision-making. To this end, mobilizing and monitoring mechanisms composed of local civil administration, educational, health and development authorities, community leaders and voluntary organizations should be established in geographical areas small enough to ensure meaningful community participation.
64. Community involvement should be sought in order to supplement in-school activities, provide help in doing homework and compensate for lack of family support. Mention should be made in this connection of the role of neighbourhood associations in making premises available, the role of family associations, youth clubs and movements, and the potential role of elderly people and other volunteers, including persons with disabilities, in both in-school and out-of-school programmes.
65. Whenever action for community-based rehabilitation is initiated from outside, it is the community that must decide whether the programme will become part of the ongoing community development activities. Various partners in the community, including organizations of persons with disabilities and other non-governmental organizations, should be empowered to take responsibility for the programme. Where appropriate, government agencies at both the national and local level should also lend financial and other support.

Role of voluntary organizations

66. As voluntary associations and national non-governmental organizations have more freedom to act and can respond more readily to expressed needs, they should be supported in developing new ideas and pioneering innovative delivery methods. They can play the roles of innovator and catalyst and extend the range of programmes available to the community.
67. Organizations of people with disabilities i.e., those in which they themselves have the decisive influence – should be invited to take an active part in identifying needs, expressing views on priorities, administering services, evaluating performance and advocating change.

Public awareness

68. Policy-makers at all levels, including the school level, should regularly reaffirm their commitment to inclusion and promote positive attitudes among children, among teachers and among the public-at-large towards those with special educational needs.
69. Mass media can play a powerful role in promoting positive attitudes towards the integration of disabled persons in society, overcoming prejudice and misinformation, and infusing greater optimism and imagination about the capabilities of persons with disabilities. The media can also promote positive attitudes of employers toward hiring persons with disabilities. The media should be used to inform the public on new approaches in education, particularly as regards provision for special needs education in regular schools, by popularizing examples of good practice and successful experiences.

G. Resource requirements

70. *The development of inclusive schools as the most effective means for achieving education for all must be recognized as a key government policy and accorded a privileged place on the nation's development agenda. It is only in this way that adequate resources can be obtained. Changes in policies and priorities cannot be effective unless adequate resource requirements are met. Political commitment, at both the national and community level, is needed both to obtain additional resources and to redeploy existing ones. While communities must play a key role in developing inclusive schools, government encouragement and support is also essential in devising effective and affordable solutions.*
71. The distribution of resources to schools should take realistic account of the differences in expenditure required to provide appropriate education for all children, bearing in mind their needs and circumstances. It may be realistic to begin by supporting those schools that wish to promote inclusive education and to launch pilot projects in some areas in order to gain the necessary expertise for expansion and progressive generalization. In the generalization of inclusive education, the level of support and expertise will have to be matched to the nature of the demand.
72. Resources must also be allocated to support services for the training of mainstream teachers, for the provision of resource centres and for special education teachers or resource teachers. Appropriate technical aids to ensure the successful operation of an integrated education system must also be provided. Integrated approaches should, therefore, be linked to the development of support services at central and intermediate levels.
73. Pooling the human, institutional, logistic, material and financial resources of various ministerial departments (Education, Health, Social Welfare, Labour, Youth, etc.), territorial and local authorities, and other specialized institutions is an effective way to maximize their impact. Combining both an educational and a social approach to special needs education will require effective management structures enabling the various services to co-operate at both national and local levels, and allowing the public authorities and associative bodies to join forces.

III Guidelines for Action at the Regional and International Level

74. *International co-operation among governmental and non-governmental, regional and interregional organizations can play a very important role in supporting the move towards inclusive schools. Based on past experience in this area, international organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental as well as bilateral donor agencies, could consider joining forces in implementing the following strategic approaches.*
75. Technical assistance should be directed to strategic fields of intervention with a multiplier effect, especially in developing countries. One important task for international co-operation is to support the launching of pilot projects aimed at trying out new approaches and at capacity building.
76. The organization of regional partnerships or partnership among countries with similar approaches in special needs education could result in the planning of joint activities under the auspices of existing regional or other co-operative mechanisms. Such activities should be designed to take advantage of economies of scale, to draw upon the experience of participating countries, and to further the development of national capabilities.
77. A priority mission incumbent upon international organizations is to facilitate exchange of data, information and results of pilot programmes in special needs education between countries and regions. Collection of internationally comparable indicators of progress in inclusion in education and employment should become a part of the worldwide database on education. Focal points might be established in sub-regional centres in order to facilitate information exchanges. Existing structures at the regional and international levels should be strengthened and their activities extended to such fields as policies, programming, training of personnel and evaluation.
78. A high percentage of disability is the direct result of lack of information, poverty and low health standards. As the worldwide prevalence of disabilities is increasing, particularly in the developing countries, there should be joint international action in close collaboration with national efforts to prevent the causes of disability through education which, in turn, would reduce the incidence and prevalence of disabilities, thereby further reducing the demands on the limited financial and human resources of a country.
79. International and technical assistance to special needs education derives from numerous sources. It is, therefore, essential to ensure coherence and complementarity among organizations of the United Nations system and other agencies lending assistance in this area.

80. International co-operation should support advanced training seminars for educational managers and other specialists at the regional level and foster co-operation between university departments and training institutions in different countries for conducting comparative studies as well as for the publication of reference documents and instructional materials.
81. International co-operation should assist in the development of regional and international associations of professionals concerned with the enhancement of special needs education and should support the creation and dissemination of newsletters or journals as well as the holding of regional meetings and conferences.
82. International and regional meetings covering issues related to education should ensure that special educational needs are addressed as an integral part of the debate and not as a separate issue. As a concrete example, the issue of special needs education should be put on the agenda of regional ministerial conferences organized by UNESCO and other intergovernmental bodies.
83. International technical co-operation and funding agencies involved in support and development of Education for All initiatives should ensure that special needs education is an integral part of all development projects.
84. International co-ordination should exist to support universal accessibility specifications in communication technology underpinning the emerging information infrastructure.
85. This Framework for Action was adopted by acclamation after discussion and amendment in the Closing Session of the Conference on 10 June 1994. It is intended to guide Member States and governmental and non-governmental organizations in implementing the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy, and Practice in Special Needs Education.

5

ANNEXES

Annex 1 Programme

Tuesday, 7 June 1994

08:30 – 09:30 Registration of participants

09:30 – 10:15 General Presentation of the Conference

10:15 – 11:15 Opening session

Mr José Dávila Rodríguez, President of Deputation of Salamanca

Mr Jesús Málaga Guerrero, Mayor of Salamanca

Mr Victor Ordoñez, Representative of the Director-General of UNESCO

Mr Gustavo Suárez Perterra, Minister of Education, Spain

Her Royal Highness Infanta Elena de España

11:45 – 13:30 **Plenary Session**

Theme 1: Policy and Legislation

Moderator: **Dr Seamus Hegarty**

Director, National Foundation for Educational Research (UK)

1. SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION:

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, PLANNING, POLICY FACTORS

Mr Bengt Lindqvist

Member of Parliament (Sweden)

2. LEGISLATION ISSUES

Prof. Maria Rita Saulle

Professor of International Law (Italy)

3. SPECIAL NEEDS AND SCHOOL REFORM

Mr Alvaro Marchesi

Secretary of State

Ministry of Education (Spain)

Respondents: **Mr Antonio José Lizarazo Ocampo**

Vice-Minister of National Education (Colombia)

Mrs Phelelo Marole

Senior Education Officer, Ministry of Education (Botswana)

Mr James Lynch

Education Specialist, Asia Technical Department, World Bank

15:00 – 16:30 **Concurrent sessions**

Moderators: **Mr C. Giné**

Inspector, Ministry of Education (Spain)

Mr J. Kisanji

Course Director, University of Manchester (UK)

Dr C. J. W. Meijer

Coordinator, Programme on Integration (Netherlands)

Mr Z. Zakaria

Counselling Consultant, Baccaulaureatte School (Jordan)

Wednesday, 8 June 1994

09:30 – 11:30 **Plenary session**

Theme 2: School Perspectives

Moderator: **Ms Marcelina Miguel**
Director of Education,
Ministry of Education (Philippines)

1. ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

Dr Margaret Wang
Director, Temple University,
Centre for Research in Human Development (USA)

2. ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLING

Dr Gordon Porter
Director of Student Services, New Brunswick (Canada)

3. TEACHER EDUCATION

Prof. N. K. Jangira
Professor and Head, Department of Teacher Education
and Special Education NCERT, New Delhi (India)

Respondent: **Prof. Klaus Wedell**
Professor, Institute of Education, London University (UK)

12:00 – 13:30 &

15:00 – 16:30 **Concurrent sessions**

Sub-theme A: ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

Moderator: **Mrs A. M. Benard da Costa**
Institute of Educational Innovation, Ministry of Education (Portugal)

Country experiences: **Canada, Spain, USA**

Sub-theme B: ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLING

Moderator: **Prof. Andrea Canevaro**
Professor, Università Degli Studi, University of Bologna (Italy)

Country experiences: **Austria, Peru, Spain, Zimbabwe**

**Sub-theme C: ACTIVE LIFE FOR DISABLED YOUTH
INTEGRATION IN THE SCHOOL PROJECT**

Moderator: **Mr Peter Evans**
Project Director (OECD)

Country experiences: **Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, USA**

Sub-theme D: TEACHER EDUCATION

Moderator: **Ms Lena Saleh**
Senior Programme Specialist UNESCO

UNESCO Project: SPECIAL NEEDS IN THE CLASSROOM

Project Director: **Mr Mel Ainscow**
Institute of Education, University of Cambridge (UK)
Country experiences: **Latin America (UNESCO), China, India, Italy, Spain**

Panel: Distance Teacher Education, (Denmark, UK)
School-Based Teacher Education, (India, Chile)
Special Education Teacher Training, (Norway)

Thursday, 9 June 1994

09:30 – 11:30 **Plenary session**

Theme 3: Community Perspectives

Moderator: **Mrs Eloisa Garcia de Lorenzo**
Consultant,
Organization of American States (Uruguay)

1. COMMUNITY-BASED REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES

Dr Brian O'Toole
CBR Programme Director (Guyana)

2. ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONS

- Role of Voluntary Organizations
Mr W. Brohier
(President ICEVH, Malaysia)
 - Role of Donor Agencies
Mrs Kerstin Rosencrantz
(SIDA, Sweden)
-

3. ROLE OF PARENTS

Mr Alain Parvillers
(France)

4. ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONS OF DISABLED PERSONS

Mr Deng Pufang
Chairman, Disabled Persons' Federation (China)

12:00 – 13:30 **Concurrent sessions**

Sub-theme A: PREPARATION FOR ADULT LIFE

Moderator: **Mr Luis Reguera**

Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist (ILO)

Country experiences: **Argentina, Spain**

Sub-theme B: EDUCATION WITHIN COMMUNITY-BASED REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES

Moderator: **Mr Ture Jönsson**

Senior Programme Officer, (UNDP/IRPDP)

Country experiences: **Benin, Ghana**

Sub-theme C: PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Moderator: **Ms M. Luisa Ramón-Laca**

Vice-President (ILSMH)

Country experiences: Parent/Professional Partnership (USA)

Parents as Innovators (Netherlands)

Friday, 10 June 1994

10:00 – 11:00 **Plenary session**

Partnership and Networking

1. CHOICES AND CHANNELS FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

Mr Victor Ordoñez

Representative of the Director General of UNESCO

2. SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Mr Domenico Lenarduzzi

Director TFRH

The European Community

3. PARTNERSHIPS IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION:

NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLE

Mr. Jez Stoner

The Save the Children Fund (UK)

12:00 – 13:30 **Closing Session**

Report of Rapporteur General

Adoption of Conclusions and Recommendations

Closing Statements

Annex 2

Addresses at the Opening Session

Address of Mr Federico Mayor

Director-General of UNESCO

Your Highness,

Mr Minister of Education and Science,

Mr Mayor of Salamanca,

*Mr President of the Castilla-Leon
Autonomous Community,*

Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

How fitting it is that this Conference on Special Needs Education should be held in this city, Salamanca, renowned not only as an ancient centre of learning, but also for knowledge in the service of humanity. The purpose of our meeting is fully in keeping with this honourable tradition. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims the right of everyone to education. Too often, alas, between this right and its effective exercise a shadow has fallen. The millions of children and adults who have special needs and requirements have, in particular, been seriously disadvantaged. Far too often, they have been the left-outs, the drop-outs and the push-outs of our education systems. We have come to meet in Salamanca to address their problem and, by so doing, to take an important step towards making education for all a reality, not merely a distant aspiration or a reassuring slogan. Our hosts, the Spanish Government, with the co-operation of the City of Salamanca, have provided excellent arrangements for our meeting and have welcomed us in a warm spirit of friendship and hospitality. I am certain that I speak for all of you in expressing to Spain and to Salamanca our deep gratitude and appreciation.

The subject of special education is one in which Spain, I am proud to report, has played a leading role. Thus, in the International Year of Disabled Persons, observed in 1981, Spain, working in close co-operation with UNESCO, hosted the World Conference on Actions and Strategies for Education, Prevention and Integration. It was my privilege to preside over this Conference, the results of which continue to guide the development of special needs education.

The task of this distinguished group is to review what has happened since 1981 regarding the world's most vulnerable children and to ask itself two searching questions: 'How can one do more? How can one do better?' We must each look critically at his or her individual experience and seek to draw lessons and inspiration from it. We must then compare these individual experiences and seek to draw wider and more general lessons from them. Our goal is to build a common understanding, a shared vision, a consensus on the further actions that are required and, ultimately, a collaborative programme to pursue the initiatives that we will launch here. The mission of UNESCO is intellectual co-operation. What this means, in the simplest of terms, is thinking and doing, then thinking about what we have done and how we might do it better.

This meeting in Salamanca is certainly beginning under the most favourable auspices. The more than 80 countries represented here, many at ministerial level, have a wealth of experience to share. For nearly a decade, our host country, Spain, for example, has been implementing a project to integrate students with special educational needs into regular classes. These efforts have been carefully studied and have recently culminated in the

adoption of legislation to ensure that all children have equal access to education. During the course of this Conference, we can look forward to hearing more about the Spanish experience from the Minister of Education and Science and his colleagues. Many other countries, from both the developed and developing worlds, will also report on their actions and efforts, their achievements and successes, their frustrations and setbacks and their future plans for moving forward in this area. This Conference is also being attended by more than 20 intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The common purpose that brings us together is to pursue the vital goal of education for all proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed by the international community in the World Declaration adopted in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990.

The record of the past decade is a mixed one. On the positive side, there is clearly a greater awareness, understanding and recognition not only of the needs, but also of the capabilities and potential of disabled people. We have begun to recognize the disabled not as people with problems, but as people with untapped potential. We are, at the same time, more alert to the possibilities for the prevention of disabilities and better prepared to respond to those with special needs in ways which assist them in leading independent and active lives. Finally, we have come to recognize that any meaningful programme to assist disabled people and – what is equally important, to enable the disabled to assist themselves – must be based on education and training. The public needs to be better informed and made aware that the disabled often suffer as much from the lack of understanding of those around them as from their infirmities themselves. And, of course, for the disabled – even more so than others – appropriate education and training are

the keys to living productive and rewarding lives. Knowledge and skills can compensate for disadvantages, just as their absence can compound and complicate them.

Yet, we must frankly admit, that while much has been done, vastly more remains to be achieved. Important aspects have still not been touched on. Others have been obscured by the actions undertaken, which are frequently lacking in scientific rigour and adequate resources. The situation is especially serious in the developing countries. There are, to be certain, many good projects and promising beginnings and these are the proof that there are affordable and workable solutions even in circumstances of extreme austerity. They are, nevertheless, the exception to the overriding rule of need. In many developing countries, it is estimated that not more than 5 per cent of children and adults with special needs are receiving adequate education. This must be of grave concern, not only to the people and countries directly affected but to the international community as a whole. One cannot build the culture of peace that our planet so urgently requires in a world indifferent to the plight and suffering of millions of innocent people.

The World Declaration and Framework for Action adopted at the World Conference on Education for All make explicit a number of principles that will form the basis of our discussions and recommendations:

- 1) the inherent right of all children to a full cycle of primary education;
- 2) the commitment to a child-centred concept of education in which individual differences are accepted as a source of richness and diversity, not viewed as an educational problem;

- 3) the need to improve educational quality in order to make universal access meaningful and advantageous;
- 4) greater parental and community participation in education; and
- 5) a greater effort to offer instruction in literacy, numeracy and basic knowledge and skills to adults, including those with special needs, the vast majority of whom were denied the benefits of a primary education.

UNESCO, working in close co-operation with partner agencies, has sought to advance the vision and message of Jomtien. We have been particularly concerned that the recommendations of Jomtien for special needs education should be taken fully into account. The Organization's programme in special education, begun in the 1960s, has been strengthened, streamlined and focused on the promotion of two key principles: *equality of opportunities and participation*.

In this as in other areas, UNESCO endeavours to play a catalytic role, providing the 'pinch of yeast' which is necessary for the flour to become bread. In special needs education, this has implied doing selective 'upstream work capable of having a significant downstream effect'. We have entered into fruitful dialogues with key partners engaged in policy-making, financing and teacher education. Our aim has been to get special education out of the ghetto and into the mainstream. We have argued that special education is not an approach suited to the needs of a few, but an approach to teaching capable of improving education for all. We have stressed that the essence of special education is a focus on the needs of the child; that a one-size-fits-all approach does a disservice not only to a minority of children, but to the majority of them. We have sought to build bridges between existing systems of

special and regular education and to encourage a rethinking of future educational plans to avoid, wherever possible, the creation of dual systems. We have urged that legislation and practice should be reviewed in the light of recent research and evaluation findings.

Of all these diverse efforts, none has received greater attention or produced more promising results than the 'Special Needs in the Classroom' project. This has been an example of 'front-line' work intended to test innovations and demonstrate and spread approaches that prove effective. At the same time, the project both develops national capacity in special needs education and actively promotes networking at both the regional and international levels. This Conference will provide the opportunity for those of you who are not already aware of it to learn about this project and, in particular, how you can participate in it and benefit from it.

I should add, in parenthesis, that while education is at the heart of UNESCO's action in favour of the disadvantaged, it is supported by activities in other fields, particularly culture and communication. The way in which cultures perceive and interpret disadvantages of different sorts is of obvious importance as is the way in which information bearing on disadvantage is presented and transmitted. In many African societies, for example, there is a sense of solidarity and participation that ensures that special education measures will be well received. In the industrialized countries, the extensive use of subtitles on television and in films enables the deaf to follow the mainstream media, while the availability of books and even newspaper stories on audio cassettes means that those with impaired vision are included. All of these developments, of course, ultimately depend upon forceful and effective advocacy by and on behalf of those with disabilities.

As our subject is extensive and time is short, I should simply like to highlight a number of important developments and key issues. My colleagues and I will be listening attentively to your discussion of these and other matters throughout this Conference in an effort to learn from your experience and to profit from your advice.

An obvious question to ask at a Conference such as this is: "What is new in special education?" There are many answers. As in most fields, progress tends to be incremental rather than dramatic. There are exceptions, of course. We have, for example, made major advances in the prevention of disabilities and may be on the threshold of dramatic new breakthroughs based on new discoveries and insights deriving from genetics and related fields. Over the past two decades, there has also been a profound change in our perception of why children or adults experience difficulties in learning. The traditional view was to blame the learner. The problem was seen to derive from his or her limitations or defects. The solution involved overcoming what was termed 'the learning deficit'. Fortunately, our thinking has evolved a good deal in recent years. We now recognize that problems often arise out of environments that pose physical, cultural or social barriers to learning. The answer, accordingly, is not to be found in correcting a defect in the child or adult, but rather in understanding the obstacles he or she is facing and, in so far as possible, removing or reducing them. It is the interaction between individual resources and limitations and the constraints posed by the environment that will ultimately determine the acuteness of a handicap and the consequences it imposes.

Another point that it seems to me necessary to stress is that special needs education cannot

advance in isolation. It must be part of an overall educational strategy and, indeed, of new social and economic policies. To give full effect to special needs education requires a review of the policy and practice in every subsector within education, from pre-schools to universities, to ensure that the curricula, activities and programmes are, to the maximum extent possible, fully accessible to all.

In this International Year of the Family, it is fitting to highlight the role of the parents and families of disabled children. Experience demonstrates that programmes that involve parents and families consistently achieve better results than those that treat the child in isolation. In addition, parents and families have proved themselves eager, motivated and resourceful in contributing to the education of the disabled child. Parents often possess skills that can be valuable to teachers as well as to other parents of disabled children.

It is, of course, not only the family, but society as a whole that must contribute to the success of special needs education. People with disabilities have for far too long been ignored or misunderstood. They have often been regarded as inherently dependent, whereas their most earnest desire is to be independent and productive. Fortunately, disabled people have now formed their own organizations and have become far more assertive of their rights. Above all, they want greater control over programmes intended to serve them. They want the right to make decisions that affect their lives. Clearly, improved access to education is an essential condition for empowering the disabled and enabling them to participate fully in the social, economic, political and cultural life of their society. Education, as already noted, is also the key to promoting greater understanding, respect and

solidarity between all members of the community. Ultimately, it is only in this broader framework that special needs education can develop and flourish.

'Disability', understood in its social context, is not simply a condition. It is far more than that. It is an experience, an experience of difference, but – all too often – also an experience of exclusion and often of oppression. It is not the individual with the disability who is responsible for this, but society's indifference, intolerance and, in some cases, even hostility. It is only in acknowledging this that we can fully comprehend the issues facing us and, especially, those faced by disabled people. An analysis that recognizes only the problem but not the context in which it arises can never result in a full and satisfactory solution.

Difference is a fact of life. What matters is our attitude towards differences. As one disabled person wisely stated: 'Attitudes are more important than facts, more important than circumstances, than failures, than successes. Attitudes will make or break a company, a home. But ... we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace. Life is 10 per cent what happens to us and 90 per cent how we react to it. We are in charge of our attitudes'.

How true that is and how important that we should not miss the critical opportunity to change attitudes that will shortly be offered us. The World Summit on Social Development, planned for Copenhagen in March 1995, will take up the issue of inclusion – and, by implication, exclusion – as one of three priority areas to be examined. This is an important opportunity to put the concerns of this Conference before the world's leaders. Working in close co-operation with a network of organizations of disabled people, UNESCO is preparing a

report to the Summit on 'ignorance, intolerance, prejudice and other obstacles to be overcome in order to integrate disabled people fully into social and national life'.

Salamanca will not be a turning-point in special needs education. We do not require that. We have an accurate sense of direction. We know what needs to be done and, to a considerable extent, how it can be achieved. What Salamanca can provide is a forum for reflection and exchange and, above all, a rallying point for action. We need to examine critically both our shortcomings and our strengths. Then, we must transform our thoughts and plans into concrete action. To do so, we need to both enhance and unify our efforts. No country can claim that it has done all it could do to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, either within its own borders or beyond them. We have only begun the vast task before us.

The time for action is now. We cannot enter the twenty-first century asking the same questions as we did in the 1970s. How many disabled children are there? Have we identified them all? Have we established procedures for including in the education system all people with disabilities who can be included? We should, of course, be able to reply affirmatively to all these questions. But we have to go beyond that. We should, by now, be asking ourselves how many young people and adults with disabilities have learned the skills and acquired the knowledge required to function effectively in society. How many have found good and rewarding jobs? These are the questions that define the challenges to which we must respond in the twenty-first century. The key questions we must answer in the years ahead do not concern what we are aiming for so much as what we are achieving. Our answers to these questions will be the measure of our success or failure.

*Your Highness,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The future is not fixed in advance. It will be fashioned by our actions and deeds and will reflect our thoughts and values. When we look around us here in this splendid city, we see the monuments and rich heritage of a people who cared deeply about the pursuit of knowledge and the well-being of humanity. It was not self-interest that made the splendours of the University of Salamanca, but the realization that humankind is never so great as when it acts out of benevolence and goodwill. It is, I am certain, possible to make a persuasive economic argument for special needs education. But it is, in my view, both more worthy and compelling to make a human argument. The merit of a society – be it that of a city or a planet – can be best judged by what it does to brighten the lives of those stricken with disadvantages and disabilities. This Conference, I fervently

hope, will long be remembered as an occasion on which the international community rose to the challenge and affirmed that education for all must mean for all and most particularly for those who are most vulnerable and most in need. In doing so, we will affirm our better selves and begin to tap the potential within us. For we, as a global society, are in fact severely disabled by pessimism, by differences, by disagreements and even by despair. When we analyse things, we lose heart, but when we compare them, we take courage. We must always look around us, that is, see the world in its entirety and act on the basis of overall criteria. We need to take our destiny into our own hands and begin tearing down the barriers that divide, weaken and distract us. The way to build a global society is by collectively tackling the great moral and ethical challenges before us. This is how we shall stir the spirit and conscience of the international community and give life and vitality to the institutions that serve it. Our problem, too, is 90 per cent attitude.

Thank you.

Address by Mr Gustavo Suárez Pertierra Minister of Education, Spain

Your Royal Highness

In my capacity as Minister for Education and Science, it is a great pleasure for me to be here with you all at the opening of the World Conference on Special Needs Education.

May I begin by thanking you, Your Royal Highness, for agreeing to act as President of Honour and for your presence here on this occasion. I also wish to thank UNESCO, and its Director-General, Mr Federico Mayor Zaragoza, for giving its patronage to this Conference, which it helped to arrange and organize, and for accepting the offer made some time ago by Spain to provide the venue. We are honoured by the support which this event implies for the education policy pursued by the Ministry for Education and Science in regard to special needs pupils, in particular, and for our education policy in general.

I should now like to place on record my appreciation for the kind welcome given to us by the President of the Council and the Mayor of Salamanca as representatives of this beautiful and historic city, and also for the interest shown by them in the organization of this event. Last but not least, may I say how grateful we are to all the countries, organizations and institutions which made this Conference possible.

We are gathered here to analyse, from a multicultural and plural standpoint, the new challenges facing education on the eve of the twenty-first century. Those challenges concern all our pupils and, in particular, those who have special educational needs for both personal and social reasons.

In my brief address, I shall endeavour to outline the problems; the debate and process of reflection over the next few days should then help to identify the possible solutions that will need to be found in the next decade.

In the final analysis, all this work will pursue the essential objective of any education system, namely, to improve the quality of education.

No universally valid definition of education can be put forward because its content depends on the social context, the particular historical juncture and also on the specific objectives assigned to education by a given society. It is no easy task to determine the key indicators which enable the quality of an education system to be assessed. Be that as it may, I think everyone will agree that one of the key indicators of the quality of education is the ability of the education system to serve pupils of every kind and, in particular, those who have special educational needs.

The adoption of that approach required a fundamental change in the concept of special education within the education system.

The planning of an education system will differ greatly, depending on whether special education is conceived as a system parallel to ordinary education or, on the contrary, understood as a set of additional resources placed in the service of the system as a whole.

Equal importance attaches to a decentralized and flexible curriculum enabling the centres and teaching staff to adapt their educational practice to the specific features of the pupils concerned and to benefit from the presence of motivated teachers who have been adequately trained to perform their difficult task successfully.

In recent years, the Spanish Ministry for Education and Science has been working to advance the cause of this school model and this quality concept.

In 1985, the Royal Decree on the Organization of Special Education already laid the basis for the effective integration of boys and girls with psychological, physical and sensory problems into the school system. Many of these children were then admitted to ordinary schools, which accepted them voluntarily and were granted the necessary staff and material resources. To do them justice, it must be acknowledged that the centres which put in hand the Integration Programme have pursued the most attractive educational projects to the highest quality standard in recent years.

Nevertheless, a process of transformation designed to attain the quality of education to which we are all committed cannot be confined to a single group of centres, however admirable the work done by them may be. On the contrary, it necessitates a response by the whole of the education system. In our particular case, that response has been set out in a law, the Law on the General Organization of the Education System which was promulgated in October 1990. In the area of special education, that new legal framework set the same goals in teaching for pupils with special educational needs as for all other schoolchildren and established the principle of the adaptation of teaching methods to their special features.

Education itself must therefore be adapted in such a way as to enable each individual pupil to progress as a function of his or her aptitudes and in the light of his or her particular needs.

The most significant advance brought about by this new regulation of the education system resides essentially in the fact that its main thrust consists in taking care of the different needs of all our pupils. The school must adapt to their particular features and differences by promoting models of action, school organization and curriculum flexibility which are consistent with the notion of education for all.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that educational changes are not sufficient if we are to achieve the necessary social transformation for the benefit of persons with special educational needs. That transformation cannot be confined to schools alone, but must also encompass the world of work and the family and social environment in general. The work done by the Ministry for Education and Science would be incomplete unless these pupils found continuity in their occupational training and integration into work and society at large. But those objectives lie beyond the capacity of an educational authority alone and we need the cooperation not only of other authorities but also of society in general through associations, non-governmental organizations and international agencies; all of these institutions are represented at this Conference.

The task of involving the whole of society in the defence of the rights of these persons to learn, work and establish relationships with others must be assumed collectively through a tenacious and persevering approach.

I therefore wish to lay emphasis on the important need for this process of reflection to take place at a World Conference of this kind

with the participation of 100 countries in which customs, cultures and races differ. The joint conclusions which are arrived at must then serve as a point of departure for the educational, employment and social policies of many countries.

I am convinced that all who are present here share a wish to turn the principle of equal opportunities for these pupils into reality. Education is the privileged path open to us

if we are to change the direction of the values by which today's world is guided and create a more equitable world based on greater solidarity in which individual differences will be respected. A school open to diversity is the first nucleus in which these values must be put into practice; that is the only way in which it will be possible to achieve widespread respect and solidarity among the peoples and citizens of the world.

Thank you very much,
your Royal Highness.

Annex 3 Working Document

1. Introduction

National education systems fail millions of children. They do this either by making inappropriate educational provision for them or by excluding them from schooling entirely. Traditionally, attention has focussed on those children and young people labelled 'handicapped' or 'disabled', with an emphasis on those having physical or sensory impairments. In fact, these labels have limited usefulness so far as education is concerned, and countries such as New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom and Spain no longer define categories of handicap in their educational legislation.

There is, however, a much larger group of children who give cause for concern. These are the very many children who, for various reasons, have difficulty in learning at school but do not come to official notice. They constitute the hidden population with special needs. To the extent that their educational needs are not identified or responded to, they fail to realise their educational potential and many drop out of school during the course of the primary cycle.

Estimates of the size of the problem vary and are imprecise in any case because of differences in definitions and in national statistics. A conservative estimate is that ten per cent of all pupils have significant difficulties in learning at school. If we add to this the very large number of children who receive no schooling, we arrive at a figure of somewhere between one and two hundred million children that are failed by our education systems.

While these global estimates serve to indicate the magnitude of the problem, they ignore the enormous diversity between countries. Universal schooling is a long established fact in some countries whereas in many others large numbers do not complete primary education. Likewise, some countries have made great strides in reforming schools so that they meet the particular needs of pupils with learning difficulties, while others have barely begun to recognise these needs or respond to them in outmoded and inappropriate ways.

Paradoxically, this diversity of provision offers hope for the future. Those countries making excellent provision demonstrate what can be achieved and their experience can be instructive for others, particularly in showing pitfalls to avoid and how to secure appropriate development more quickly. Countries differ in the amount of resources they can commit to education and this is a constraining factor where special educational provision is concerned. Economic factors must not be ignored but, equally, their power must not be overestimated. The relationship between a nation's wealth and its education system is not a linear one, as is demonstrated by the enormous differences in the nature and extent of provision that can be found in countries which are at a similar stage of development.

The World Declaration on Education for All 'Meeting Basic Learning Needs' offers a framework for progress but it does not guarantee that progress will be made. It can give a stimulus to the enhancing of basic learning opportunities for the entire community, and this provides the best context for developing special educational provision. There is a risk, however. Extending or reforming basic education presents many challenges and puts pressures on budgets which are already constrained. In some cases the danger is that children and young people who have difficulty in learning will come low in the priority order. Every effort must be made to ensure that this does not happen so that the young people in question participate in educational opportunities alongside their peers and within their community.

2. Guiding principles

Many countries have made great strides in providing for children and young people with special educational needs but much remains to be done. There are two distinct challenges. The first is to maintain the resource base for special educational provision, where it has been established, in the face of the constant pressure on public expenditure. If advances are secured in other areas of education or in other public services, this must not be at the cost of expenditure on special educational provision. The second challenge is to improve

the general level of provision everywhere so that it matches best current practice. In particular, this means bringing about reform in the primary school to highlight the hidden population with special needs and make appropriate provision for them. Given the different situations of countries, this will remain an aspiration for many years to come but it is important for those who would bring about change to have a vision of what is possible.

The need for action draws on three main sets of principles: moral; political; and economic. The **moral argument** refers to basic human rights. It is widely recognised, and enshrined in many documents, that all children have the right to education and that this right holds regardless of disability or learning difficulty. If as a consequence some children need special steps to be taken for them to have effective access to schooling, then equity requires that such special educational provision be made. Treating people as equals when they are not is neither equitable nor is it to offer equality of opportunity. The latter can only be achieved by unequal treatment, which in the school sector means special educational provision.

The **political argument** flows from this: if a nation does cherish all its citizens equally, it must ensure that everybody has effective access to social goods, including education. This duty is reinforced by the numerous national and international declarations committing governments to providing a free, appropriate education for every child. Fine rhetoric without commensurate action debases the political process, and it is incumbent on governments to fulfil the promises made with regard to educating all children. This is related to the coherence of a society's value system: if a nation prides itself on its equitable regard for all its citizens, it can hardly tolerate the existence of a subgroup deprived of educational opportunities or relegated to a marginal position within the education system.

The **economic argument** is based on the fact that education fosters self-sufficiency and reduces individuals' dependence on the state. This is widely accepted for the mainstream population but, increasingly, it is being demonstrated to hold true

for those with disabilities as well. Poverty and/or dependence on welfare when available have been the norm for adults with disabilities. Education and training can liberate them, however, especially when linked to changes in society and the labour market. A growing body of experience in developed and developing countries alike testifies to the possibilities for people with disabilities to become productive members of their communities. If a lifelong perspective is taken, education is an investment with a positive economic pay-off even for those with pronounced disabilities or learning difficulties.

3. New thinking in special needs education

A world conference held thirty years ago would have inhabited a very different conceptual climate from today. It would have concerned itself with the handicapped and their care. It would have assumed that those who were capable of being educated would be educated in segregated special schools. The mainstream school system would have had very limited involvement; indeed, at national level health and social services ministries would have been as likely to be involved as education ministries. The role of parents and their relationship with professionals would have been conceived quite differently from today. Parents would have been regarded as peripheral to their children's education; they were given little information on their difficulties or the educational programmes offered to them, and certainly could not expect to have a formal role in the assessment and education of their handicapped child.

Thinking about children and young people who have difficulty in learning has changed a great deal since then. The changes draw partly on the comprehensive school debate and the wider expectations of ordinary schools, partly on dissatisfaction with what were perceived to be the limited achievements of special schools and partly on the growing currency of key ideas developed in various parts of the world. Chief among these were the principles of normalization first expounded in Sweden, the civil rights movement in the United States, the British insistence on the educability

of every child and the anti-institutionalisation movement in Italy.

Two of the key changes, which underpin many of the others, relate to our understanding of why children have difficulties in learning at school and to the ways in which school systems should respond to these difficulties.

The traditional view of children who have difficulty in learning at school is that they are handicapped in various ways – obviously so in the way of those who have physical or sensory impairments and by inference in the case of the mentally retarded. We now know that this is at best a partial account and is seriously misleading in key respects. Quite apart from the fact that it overlooks the very large number of slow and disaffected learners, it attributes an explanatory power to handicapping conditions that is not supported by the evidence. Pupils with similar handicaps may have very different educational needs. Thus, pupils who fall into the partially hearing category vary greatly in the amount of useful hearing they possess and in the extent to which they learn to make use of it. Even though special education and special schools in particular have been based on the categories of handicap for many years, these categories have strictly limited relevance to the planning and delivery of educational provision.

Children have difficulty in learning for many reasons. These can be grouped into three broad but interlocking sets: *innate* factors of the kind associated with the traditional view of handicap; *environmental* factors; and *school-related* factors.

Innate factors such as overt physical handicap or inferred brain damage must not be ignored. That would be as much a mistake as ascribing too much importance to them. The fact that there is not a direct or invariant link between a given impairment and a particular kind of learning difficulty does not mean that there are no links. Children manifest differences in learning rate and emotional resilience which affect how they learn, and these differences may well reflect innate factors even if the precise causal link cannot be established.

The child is a social being as well as an individual and is a member of various social groupings – family, neighbourhood, ethnic group, language community and so on. This is the arena in which environmental factors come into play. These factors are not in themselves the direct cause of learning difficulties but rather provide a context in which certain development should take place within the child. If this development does take place, the child is set to grow in learning in a way that will be regarded as normal; if it does not, the child is likely to experience learning difficulty.

The most pervasive source of learning difficulties is the school system itself. This is where innate and environmental factors interact to create learning difficulties. Schools define the activities and standards by which pupils' achievement is marked. By the same token, they set the benchmarks for failure. Unless schools have the pedagogical sophistication to match the wide-ranging demands they make on pupils to their very different learning situations, failure is the inevitable outcome for many pupils.

It should come as no surprise that schools create learning difficulties in this way. Research on school effectiveness has shown that schools do make a difference: pupils receive a better education in some schools than they would in other schools. If this is so, it follows that some schools make poorer provision than others. Regrettably, this provision is often poorest where pupils with special educational needs are concerned: they have to cope with inappropriate curriculum content and unsuitable teaching approaches, and their sense of failure is constantly reinforced by rigid assessment procedures and an insensitive school ethos.

The second strand in the new thinking relates to the way in which the school system should respond to pupils who have difficulty in learning.

The *traditional view*, following on from concepts of handicap and inherent limitations in learning capacity, was that ordinary schools were not well suited to handicapped children. Neither architecture nor curriculum nor school ethos was conducive to their receiving an appropriate education, and moreover their presence in the ordinary school

interfered with the education of the non-handicapped children. If they were to be educated, it would be better on all counts for segregated provision to be made for them.

The *contemporary notion* is based on school reform. It assumes that the ordinary school should be the first option for every child and that alternative, segregated schooling should be sought only as a last resort. It claims that the number of those for whom special schooling is necessary is very much smaller than much practice would suggest. It also finds that integrated provision can be significantly cheaper than the equivalent segregated provision.

All this calls for major reform of the ordinary school. If a principal reason for excluding particular pupils in the first place was that the ordinary school was failing to meet their needs, it makes no sense to bring them back unless changes are made.

The requisite changes extend to all aspects of the school's life – curriculum, pedagogy, academic organisation, assessment, staffing, school ethos, extracurricular activities, buildings – and must be pursued in a whole-school way since they are linked in the organic unity of the school. The goal is an inclusive school where all pupils belong, where all work on appropriate educational programmes devised within a common curriculum framework and where all receive the particular help required by their individual learning needs.

4. UNESCO and special needs education

From a modest beginning in 1966 special education has become a significant part of UNESCO's programme. The International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981 marked a turning point, and the work gathered momentum throughout the eighties in terms of both budget allocations and range of activities supported. While the amount of resources remains modest in absolute terms, UNESCO has capitalised on extensive networking and its unique global position to enhance numerous national and regional initiatives in special education. Its links with other UN agencies, national development agencies and non-governmental organisations have enabled a small secretariat to become a significant force in special needs education worldwide and to contribute to the development of special educational provision in many countries.

The programme during the eighties consisted of three main strands:

1. Elaboration of guidelines and strategies for national and international action in the field of special needs education. This included expert meetings and consultations, a study of teacher training, and a world conference in Torremolinos, Spain in November 1981 organised jointly with the Spanish Government on Actions and Strategies for Education, Prevention and Integration.
2. Information: compilation, dissemination and exchange. UNESCO receives numerous requests for information on special needs education from member states, non-governmental organisations and practitioners. In order to respond to these it has studied various issues and compiled information and training materials. These are disseminated widely, with many available in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Arabic) and some in Chinese and Russian as well. These materials include:

- i) Guides for Special Education – nine booklets addressed to teachers, parents and community workers presenting basic information on the education and training of children and young people with disabilities.
 - ii) Review of the Present Situation in Special Education, 1988.
 - iii) Directory of Special Education, 1986
3. Technical Co-operation. This consists of national or regional projects funded by extra budgetary resources (UN bodies, aid agencies, non-governmental organisations and special funds). These are focussed on the developing regions. Most have been at national level but there has been a major project covering 15 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa (1981 to 1989).

More recently, UNESCO's programme has been set explicitly within an integrated education framework. The major activities here related to:

- i) Planning educational provision for special needs. A policy document on the principles underlying special educational provision and the review of practice has been distributed. Regional and sub-regional seminars have been held to introduce policy orientations and discuss planning and management issues.
- ii) Special Needs in the Classroom: a teacher education project. This has been designed to help teachers develop their thinking and practice with respect to the ways in which they can respond to all pupils who experience difficulties in schools, those with particular disabilities as well as others who do not make satisfactory progress. The main elements are a Teacher Education Resource Pack, with accompanying videos and a Guide for Teacher Educators. The pack has been piloted in eight countries by an international resource team and is in widespread use. It will be described in detail at the conference.
- iii) Childhood disabilities: the young child and the family environment. This has entailed the preparation of video training packages aimed especially at parents and community workers in developing countries for intervention with children vulnerable to developmental handicaps.
- iv) Legislation for special education. Information has been collected on national legislation in 57 countries. This has been analysed and will be described at the conference.

5. Purpose of the Conference

The World Conference on Special Needs Education will address the shortfall in special educational provision globally and the ways in which improvements can be made. It will be set within the framework laid down by the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) regarding the measures to be taken for the education of those with special educational needs.

The main purposes of the Conference are to

- ◆ **present new thinking on learning difficulties and disabilities and on the relationship between special educational provision and general school reform**
- ◆ **review recent developments in provision for children and young people with special educational needs.**
- ◆ **highlight breakthroughs and significant experiences in key areas such as legislation, curriculum, pedagogy, school organisation, teacher education and community participation.**
- ◆ **provide a forum for sharing experiences at international, regional and bilateral levels and an opportunity for negotiating ongoing collaboration.**

The conference will also help to shape UNESCO's further work in special needs education.

6. Regional seminars

An important element of the preparation for the World Conference has been a series of five regional seminars organised by UNESCO with financial support from the Swedish government. These were held in different parts of the world over 1992/93. These grew in part out of the new climate created by the Jomtien conference and the reappraisal of educational strategies and commitments it stimulated. National governments became more aware of the need for policy initiatives to tackle gaps in educational provision, especially for those suffering educational disadvantage, and many countries are renewing their efforts to enhance services for children and young people with special educational needs.

The seminars brought together senior education decision makers from different countries, including persons holding national responsibility for primary and for special education. The purpose of the seminars was to mobilise policy and professional support for developing educational opportunities for pupils with special educational needs and to ensure that these occur within the regular school system to the greatest extent possible.

The first seminar was held in Botswana in August 1992 and involved delegates from nine countries in the region along with representatives of non-governmental organisations. This was succeeded by seminars in Venezuela (six countries), Vienna (five countries), Jordan (six countries) and China (12 countries). The seminars followed a common format: presentation of international and regional trends, country reports, focussed discussions, a study visit and future planning. A report on each seminar is available from UNESCO.

Numerous recommendations and action plans were formulated as a result of these seminars, and a full account can be obtained by referring to the seminar reports and, for specific country details, the national delegates. Some of the key themes that recurred throughout may be noted here:

- i) **The creation of inclusive schools which cater for a wide range of pupil need should be given high priority. Steps to facilitate this include having a common administrative structure for special and regular education, providing special education support services to regular schools, and adapting the curriculum and teaching approaches.**
- ii) **Teacher education must be adapted to further inclusive education and to promote collaboration between regular class teachers and special education teachers. This is a concern both for general teacher education and for specialist in-service education.**
- iii) **Pilot projects based on inclusive education should be established and evaluated carefully in the light of local services. Such evaluative information can guide policy and practice in key ways and should be disseminated both within countries and to other countries that share similar circumstances.**

7. Conference programme

The overall aim of the Conference is to assist in improving educational provision for children and young people with special needs wherever they live. There are two overarching themes: guaranteeing every child access to educational opportunities, and working to ensure that those opportunities represent education of high quality. These provide a framework for examining, through keynote addresses, small group presentations, discussion and plenary reports, the three substantive themes of the conference: policy and legislation; school quality factors; and community perspectives.

The first theme – Policy and Legislation – has to do with the framework within which special educational provision is made at national level. The keynote speakers will address the policy challenges posed by moving special education into the mainstream; traditional policy and legislative frameworks are no longer sufficient but new frameworks are not easily established and must

take account of the particular situation of each country. Details on the UNESCO study of developments in special education legislation will be presented for the first time. There will also be a presentation on the national school reform in Spain which has achieved major success in incorporating special educational provision into the ordinary school system. Particular aspects of policy development will be addressed by *respondents from Botswana, Colombia and the World Bank Asian Study team.*

The second theme is concerned with **School Quality Factors**. Keynote speakers will address the curriculum and the factors governing access to it for students with special educational needs, teacher education at both initial and in-service levels, and school organisation in the context of meeting special educational needs. The UNESCO teacher education project on Special Needs in the Classroom will be described in detail, with examples of practice based on the training pack from Chile, China, India, Italy and other countries. There will also be presentations on distance teacher education and school-based education. The project on Integration in the School organised by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development will be described, and examples of practice from seven different countries presented. In addition, all the sub-themes of the day will be illustrated by a wide range of innovative practice drawn from many different countries.

The third theme groups a number of related topics under the heading **Community Perspective**. The keynote speakers will cover, respectively, community-based rehabilitation programmes; the roles of voluntary organisations and donor agencies; parents; and disabled persons. In addition to country experiences illustrating the various topics, the International Labour Organisation will present a session on preparation for adult life covering the transition from school to adulthood and working life, skills training and vocational training.

The final session of the conference will be devoted to **Partnership and Networking**. An important aim of the conference is to provide a forum for sharing experiences at different levels and building up partnerships for the future. Countries can learn a great deal from each other; even though national contexts are never identical, lessons can be learned from experiences in one country that can inform practice in other countries. It is intended that the conference as a whole will provide opportunities to share information on innovative practice, both through the formal sessions and the many informal discussions which it will facilitate. However, it is important also to give explicit attention to this theme of sharing, and that is the purpose of the final session.

UNESCO's work in special needs education will be described. This work is based on international co-operation and to that extent is heavily dependent on the inputs made by member countries. It is hoped to put forward concrete proposals to build on the successful work to date. Wherever possible, collaborative projects will be sought that capitalise on and enhance countries' own programmes. In this way positive experiences from one place can contribute to the improvement of educational opportunities for all children and young people.

Annex 4 Conference Committees

Bureau of the Conference

PRESIDENT		Marchesi, Alvaro Secretary of State, Ministry of Education	Spain
VICE PRESIDENTS	<i>Latin America:</i>	Armuelles Hernandez, Bolivar Vice-Minister of Education	Panama
	<i>Africa:</i>	Kipre, Pierre Minister of Education	Ivory Coast
	<i>Asia:</i>	Vixaysakd, Bounthong Director of General Education, Ministry of Education	RPD Laos
	<i>Arab States:</i>	Maatouk Maatouk, M. Minister of Education	Libya
RAPPORTEUR GENERAL		Mittler, Peter Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Manchester	United Kingdom

Drafting Committee

<i>Resource Persons:</i>	Dr N. K. Jangira	India
	Mr Joseph Kisanji	Tanzania
	Mr Zuhair Zakaria	Jordan
	Mr Ramiro Cazar	Ecuador
	Dr Dawn Hunter	USA
	Dr James Lynch	World Bank
	Mr Jorgen Hansen	Denmark

Programme Committee

	Mr Peter Evans	Paris, France
	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	
	Mr Jorgen Hansen	Denmark
	Ministry of Education	
	Mr Ture Jonsson	Geneva, Switzerland
	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP/IRD)	
	Mr Joseph Kisanji	Tanzania
	Manchester University, UK	
	Mr Alvaro Marchesi	Spain
	Secretary of State, Ministry of Education	
	Ms Danielle Van Steenlandt (Previously UNESCO / Latin America)	Belgium
COORDINATOR	Ms Lena Saleh	UNESCO
CONSULTANT	Dr Seamus Hegarty Director, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)	United Kingdom

Organization Committee

Sr. D. Alvaro Marchesi Ullastres	Secretario de Estado de Educación. M.E.C.* España
Sr. D. Juan Antonio Menéndez Pidal	Delegado de España en la UNESCO
Sra. D^a. Catalina Ramos	Subdirectora General de Cooperación Internacional. España
Sr. D. Eloy Hernández	Subdirector General de Educación Especial. España
Sr. D. Fernando Pampín Vázquez	Director Provincial del M.E.C. de Salamanca. España
Sra. D^a. Lena Saleh	Educación Especial, UNESCO
Sra. D^a. Ana Cortázar	Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia. España
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Annex 5 **Plenary and Concurrent Session Papers**

List of Plenary Papers

Theme 1: Policy and Legislation

Mr Bengt Lindqvist	Special needs education: Conceptual framework, planning & policy factors.
Prof Maria Rita Saulle	Legislation issues.
Mr Alvaro Marchesi Ullastres	Special educational need and educational reform.
Dr James Lynch (respondent)	Asia regional study of children with special educational needs.

Theme 2: School Perspectives

Dr Margaret Wang	Serving students with special needs: Equity and Access.
Dr Gordon Porter	Organization of schooling: Achieving access and quality through inclusion.
Prof. N.K. Jangira	Rethinking teacher education.
Prof. Klaus Wedell (respondent)	Respondent to issues on theme 2: School perspectives.

Theme 3: Community Perspectives

Dr Brian O'Toole	Community-based rehabilitation programmes.
Mr William Brohier	Role of voluntary organisations.
Mr Alain Parvilliers	The role of parents.
Mr Deng Pufang	Role of organizations of disabled persons.

Partnership and Networking

Mr Jez Stoner	Partnerships in special needs education: Non-governmental organisations, governments and people.
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List of Concurrent Session Papers

Theme 2: School Perspectives

A: ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

Elena Martín Ortega	Spain	El acceso al currículo de los alumnos con necesidades educativas especiales.
Katherine D. Seelman	USA	Access to curriculum for children with special needs.

B: ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLING

Mary Gálvez Escudero	Peru	Organización escolar.
Volker Rutte	Austria	Austrian integration models.
Manuel Fernández Pérez	Spain	Organización escolar.
I. M. Sibanda	Zimbabwe	Organization of schooling: The Zimbabwe experience.

C: OECD

Dr Hübner	Germany	Special education in Berlin.
Darlene E. Perner	Canada	Multi-level instruction.
A. Dens & E. Hoedemaekers	Belgium	Integration through cooperation.
Liam O'hEigearta	Ireland	The integration of pupils with physical and/or communication disabilities in ordinary classes as a consequence of introducing grant-aided computers to primary schools.
Lucía de Ana	Italy	Vie active pour les adolescents handicapés. Intégration à l'école.
Kolbrún Gunnarsdóttir	Iceland	Active life for disabled youth: Integration in the school.
Dawn L. Hunter	USA	The ultimate goal: Inclusive education for all.

D: TEACHER EDUCATION

Mel Ainscow	UK	The UNESCO Teacher Education Project.
Jorgen Hansen	Denmark	A European model for in-service training.
Monica Dalen	Norway	Special education teacher training in Norway.

Theme 3: Community Perspectives

A: PREPARATION FOR ADULT LIFE

Mariano A. de Paz	Argentina	Integración en el programa de educación y formación técnica en la república Argentina.
Rafael Mendía Gallardo	Spain	Una experiencia desde la comunidad autónoma del país Vasco.

B: EDUCATION WITHIN
COMMUNITY-BASED REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES

L. Ofori Addo	Ghana	Country experience – Ghana.
Constance Facia	Benin	L'éducation dans le cadre des programmes de réadaptation à base communautaire.

C: PARENTS AS PARTNERS

T. de Wit-Gosker	Netherlands	Parents as partners.
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